

POEMS BY MATTHEW ARNOLD.



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MATTHEW ARNOLD

SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

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PREFACE

THIS volume of selections from the poems of Matthew Arnold is intended primarily as a subject for lessons on English Literature, and it is in some sense uniform with the annotated poems of Tennyson already published, though the notes here are much less full. There is too much thought, too much philosophy of life in Arnold's poems to make them profitable reading for the very young, but it is conceived that for both boys and girls in the higher forms of schools they are admirably suitable, and may serve both to cultivate taste and to awaken reflection.

In regard to the selection, some will perhaps criticise the exclusion of *Sohrab and Rustum*. About this I can only say that I sincerely regret it, but it was necessary from considerations of space to choose between this and *Balder Dead*, and it seems to me that the latter is more suited for the purpose.

The Introduction supplies an outline of the author's life, including a short bibliography of his poems, and then some general remarks on their qualities and characteristics. In these last I am conscious of having sometimes adopted the expressions of Mr Hugh Walker,

whose *Greater Victorian Poets* has a sympathetic account of Matthew Arnold. In the Notes will be found further appreciation of particular poems, with illustration from the author's published letters and from other sources. As to the commentary, it is inevitable that in such cases the editor should seem to some readers too often to explain the obvious, and needlessly to paraphrase good verse into bad prose. He can only plead that he has endeavoured to be useful. Possibly also it may be thought that too much space has been given to the explanation of local allusions in *The Scholar-Gipsy* and in *Thyrsis*; but here it may be said that the information given is all derived from personal knowledge, and some of it at least will probably be interesting both to those who know and to those who do not know the locality.

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INTRODUCTION.

MATTHEW ARNOLD was the eldest son of Thomas Arnold. He was born at Laleham, near Staines, December 24th, 1822, and his father became headmaster of Rugby in 1828. He was at school for a short time at Winchester, and then (1837-1841) at Rugby. He won a Balliol scholarship in 1840, and went into residence at Oxford in the autumn of 1841. As an undergraduate he was both distinguished and popular. He won the prize for English verse with a poem on 'Cromwell,' and though he did not read hard enough to obtain a first class in the schools, he was elected a Fellow of Oriel in 1845. Here he became intimate with Clough, to whom he was much attached as a friend, though he does not seem to have cared much for his poetry. In 1847 he became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne, and in 1849 he published anonymously a volume of poems, *The Strayed Reveller and other Poems, by A.*, which had not a very wide circulation but was at once recognized by a cultivated few as much above the ordinary level. This indeed it might well be, for besides

The Strayed Reveller it contained *Myceunus*, *The Forsaken Merman*, *The Sick King in Bokhara*, the lines *To a Gipsy Child on the Sea-shore*, *The New Sirens*, and *Resignation*, not to mention other pieces of less note. The poet, in fact, appears in this volume almost completely developed. There may be found in it examples, and good examples, of all his poetical styles (for *The Forsaken Merman* is more of an elegiac than a narrative poem), and we can clearly see in it the author's conceptions of life. The readers of it found "a sensibility and an inward experience intensely modern, expressed with a luminousness and a perfection of form that was purely Greek." In 1851 Arnold married, and about the same time he accepted an appointment as Inspector of Schools. In 1852 there appeared a second small volume, *Empedocles on Etna and other Poems*, by A., containing, besides *Empedocles*, *Tristram and Iseult*, *Faded Leaves*, *The Youth of Nature*, *The Youth of Man*, *Morality*, *A Summer Night*, *The Buried Life*, *Lines Written in Kensington Gardens*, *Stanzas in Memory of the Author of "Obermann,"* and other smaller pieces. This volume was withdrawn, as the author says, "before fifty copies had been sold," apparently because he was dissatisfied with *Empedocles on Etna*, and in the next year, 1853, there appeared *Poems by Matthew Arnold*, which included many of the poems which had already appeared, and a few more, especially *Sohrab and Rustum* and *The Scholar-Gipsy*. In 1855 was published *Poems by Matthew Arnold. Second Series*, which contained *Balder Dead* and a fresh instalment of poems from the two anonymous volumes. Two years later appeared *Merope*, a drama on the model of a Greek tragedy.

In 1857 he was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and was re-elected for a second term of five years in 1862. In 1859 he was sent as Commissioner to inquire into the state of elementary education in France, Germany, and Holland, and again in 1865 to report upon the provisions for secondary education in the same countries. Middle class education was, in his mind, the one thing needed above all others in England, and there is no doubt that by his work on these Commissions, and also by his reports as Inspector of Schools, he did great service to the cause of education generally.

In 1865 he published a volume of critical essays (*Essays in Criticism*), which were recognized as placing him in the first rank of literary critics.

Two years later appeared another volume of poetry, *New Poems by Matthew Arnold*, 1867. In this volume *Empedocles on Etna* was republished at the request of Robert Browning, and there was also included *Thyrsis*, *Stanzas from Carnac*, *A Southern Night*, *Rugby Chapel*, *Obermann Once More*, *Saint Brandan*, and other poems, including some excellent sonnets. After this he only occasionally wrote in verse, but he published several volumes of prose criticism on literary and religious subjects, the excellence of which has perhaps caused his poetry to be for the present less highly appreciated than it deserves.

A collected edition of his poems was first published in 1869 and again in 1877 and 1885, and finally "a new and complete edition" in one volume in 1890. He died rather suddenly at Liverpool, on Sunday, April 15th, 1888.

Matthew Arnold is not a popular poet: his style is too

severely classical; he is too reticent in the expression of emotion and too seriously reflective to attract any but the thoughtful reader. He is his own best critic, and has fewer faults and redundancies of style than any of the contemporary poets. His productions are polished gems, and he never loses the sense of proportion or the self-restraint which belongs to the artist. At the same time, his poems are full of his own personality, and of the various forms which he adopted, the lyric and the elegiac were the best suited to him. He had no aptitude for the dramatic form, and although some of his narrative poems are good, they hardly can be said to attain the level of the best of his other work. It has been justly said that he is perhaps the first of English elegiac poets. The mood of plaintive reflection exactly suits him. "He does not concentrate sorrow on the individual, but widens his view to human life in general.

. . . Nowhere else is he so uniformly good."

Poetry, according to Arnold, is the "criticism of life," and the poet ought, therefore, to have a philosophy clearly thought out in his own mind, and underlying all his utterances. The philosophy of life which is contained in these poems is not unlike that of the ancient Stoics. All true happiness is from within, and to seek within his own bosom for an inward good, to possess his soul in peace, while practising resignation in regard to outward things, is all that the wise man can do. There is a light to be attained, fugitive indeed but gracious; there is a good which can be gained, but not by outward striving. The turmoil of the world does not help to any end that is worth aiming at; the true soul of man dwells apart from the tumult, and this is the 'Palladium'

which rules our life, while it lasts we cannot wholly end,

“ And when it fails, fight as we will, we die ”

We are only half fitted for the labours and the pleasures of life, and hence we can be satisfied fully with neither :

“ We but dream we have our wish'd-for powers ,
Ends we seek we never shall attain ”

And yet, he argues, we must not allow ourselves to be duped into the belief that we shall one day inherit an existence in which our desires will be fully satisfied if happiness has so often eluded us here, this should teach us rather to moderate our desires than to fly to dreams of boundless bliss The poet expresses his own philosophy through the mouth of Empedocles in stanzas which testify to the strong influence which the philosophy of Goethe had over him .

“ Once read thy own breast right,
And thou hast done with fears ;
Man gets no other light,
Search he a thousand years
Sink in thyself ' there ask what ails thee, at that shrine ' ”

“ We would have inward peace, /
Yet will not look within ,
We would have misery cease,
Yet will not cease from sin ,
We want all pleasant ends, but will use no harsh means.

“ We do not what we ought,
What we ought not, we do,
And lean upon the thought
That chance will bring us through ,
But our own acts, for good or ill, are mightier powers.

“Yet even when man forsakes
 All sin,—is just, is pure,
 Abandons all which makes
 His welfare insecure,—
 Other existences there are, that clash with ours

“Streams will not curb their pride
 The just man not to entomb,
 Nor lightnings go aside
 To give his virtues room ;
 Nor is that wind less rough which blows a good man’s barge ”
Empedocles on Etna.

If we would have the calm of nature, we must live self-poised and self-dependent, as the stars and the sea, not demanding that other things outside ourselves should yield us love or sympathy

“Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
 In what state God’s other works may be,
 In their own tasks all their powers pouring
 These attain the mighty life you see ”

Self-Dependence

And yet our life cannot be altogether like theirs, for in a certain sense Man must be in whom Nature ends, the divine strife of duty is not hers, the earnestness of effort is not upon her brow, and yet it is in this that Man finds his highest hopes of good

Matthew Arnold is a poet of Nature in the same sense as Wordsworth, and he has the same attitude of contemplation. Natural scenery impresses him vividly, and there is a truth and completeness about his pictures which can hardly be surpassed. At the same time he is influenced most by the peace, the

quiet working, and the comparative permanence of Nature, in contrast with the fitful turmoil and ceaseless change of human things. Subdued objects are his favourites, mist rather than brightness, moonlight rather than sunlight. It is in the grey of the misty morning that he makes us see the Tartar camp at the opening of *Sohrab and Rustum*, in the moonlight that the princely pair in *The Church of Brou* are imagined to wake, that the poet traverses the silent streets of Cette, and gazes again in later years on the calm Mediterranean beyond its lagoons, that he thinks to begin the quest of the *Scholar-Gipsy* or looks out on the full tide of *Dover Beach*, it is amid the spent lights that quiver and gleam about the sea-caves that he imagines the human wife of his Merman to sit and listen to the far-off bells. And so also of sounds he has ears rather for the 'tremulous cadence slow' of the retreating tide or for the quiet murmur of the 'Midland deep,' than for the advancing thunder and roar of the tempest.

Picturesqueness of description and of simile is a marked characteristic of Arnold's poetry, and as examples we may note especially the successive scenes of *The Strayed Reveller*, the beautiful pictures in the concluding part of *The Church of Brou* and in *The Forsaken Merman*, as well as the truthfulness of the natural scenery in *Resignation*, in *The Scholar-Gipsy*, and in *Thyrsis*. Of *Thyrsis*, he says himself, "The images are all from actual observation," and this we may readily believe of most of the descriptions in his other poems. In the matter of similes the author is content with a resemblance of a general kind or in some particular point without that elaborate aptness

of detail which is aimed at by some modern poets. His description of the scene introduced for comparison has often a Homeric simplicity, and the simile once conceived acquires for the poet an independent interest of its own, apart from its use for illustration. Take, for example, the simile of the diver in *Sohrab and Rustum*

“ And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands—
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came ”

Here the resemblance is in one point only, the welcome to one whose coming relieves from fear, but there the comparison ceases, the fear is not of the same kind in the two cases and the circumstances are in no other way parallel, yet we have the picture in full. So in the simile of the eagle that has lost his mate, the resemblance is only in the one point of loss of which the sufferer is unconscious, yet the simile extends over some twenty lines and has a picturesqueness and pathos of its own, which is almost independent of the scene by which it is suggested. So also in *Balder Dead*, Part II, l 91 ff.,

“ But as when cowherds in October drive
Their kine across a snowy mountain-pass
To winter-pasture on the southern side,
And on the ridge a waggon chokes the way,
Wedge'd in the snow, then painfully the hinds
With goad and shouting urge their cattle past,
Plunging through deep untrodden banks of snow

To right and left, and warm steam fills the air—
So on the bridge that damsel block'd the way ”

This surely is a more poetical use of simile than the method which aims at exact correspondence of detail

But apart from the more fully worked-out passages of description, Arnold is often very felicitous in his condensed pictures, phrases which suggest a scene without completely describing it, as in *The Scholar Gipsy*,

“ those wide fields of breezy grass,
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering Thames ”,

in *Thyrsis*,

“ And that sweet city with her dreaming spires ”,

in *Dover Beach*

“ down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world ”

Often, too, he expresses a pregnant thought in language which impresses it on the mind and gives it currency on the tongue, as in *Morality*,

“ tasks in hours of insight will'd
Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd,”

or the characteristic maxim, repeated so often in various forms,

“ The aids to noble life are all within,”

or the prayer,

“ Calm, calm me more ' nor let me die
Before I have begun to live ”

The chief criticism which is to be made upon his poetical performance is that it is not always sufficiently spontaneous. He is not one of those who sing because they must. Often he is more like one who has thought out his thoughts first and then set himself deliberately to give them a poetical form, than one to whom verse is the most natural vehicle of expression. The exceptions are chiefly to be found in such lyrics as *The Strayed Reveller*, where he is directly under the influence of the Greek spirit, and in the best of the elegies—*The Scholar-Gypsy*, *Thyrsis*, *A Southern Night*, and *Rugby Chapel*. He probably at last decided for himself that prose was the form of expression most suited to his genius, and in the last twenty years of his life he wrote only a few occasional poems. Closely connected with this is the want of complete harmony in his verse. In short, with all his poetical merits, we cannot place Matthew Arnold among the few greatest masters of English verse. Nevertheless, he has his own high qualities as a poet: his thought is interesting and elevated, his language is dignified, and there is a special distinction about his style which suggests a classical model, even where none perhaps was directly before his mind. Both as a poet and as a prose writer he has bequeathed to the English race things which it will not willingly allow to die.

POEMS BY MATTHEW ARNOLD.

EARLY POEMS

QUIET WORK

ONE lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—

Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity !
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplish'd in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry !

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil, 10
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,

Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting ,
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

THE CHURCH OF BROU.

I

The Castle

Down the Savoy valleys sounding,
 Echoing round this castle old,
 'Mid the distant mountain-chalets
 Hark ! what bell for church is toll'd ?

In the bright October morning
 Savoy's Duke had left his bride
 From the castle, past the drawbridge,
 Flow'd the hunters' merry tide

Steeds are neighing, gallants glittering ;
 Gay, her smiling lord to greet,
 From her mullion'd chamber-casement
 Smiles the Duchess Marguerite

10

From Vienna, by the Danube,
 Here she came, a bride, in spring
 Now the autumn crisps the forest ,
 Hunters gather, bugling

Hounds are pulling, prickers swearing,
 Horses fret, and boar-spears glance
 Off !—They sweep the marshy forests,
 Westward, on the side of France

20

Hark ! the game's on foot , they scatter !—
 Down the forest-ridings lone,
 Furious, single horsemen gallop——
 Hark ! a shout—a crash—a groan !

Pale and breathless, came the hunters ,
 On the turf dead lies the boar—
 God ! the Duke lies stretch'd beside him,
 Senseless, weltering in his gore

In the dull October evening,
 Down the leaf-strewn forest-road, 30
 To the castle, past the drawbridge,
 Came the hunters with their load

In the hall, with sconces blazing,
 Ladies waiting round her seat,
 Clothed in smiles, beneath the dais
 Sate the Duchess Marguerite

Hark ! below the gates unbarring !
 Tramp of men and quick commands !
 “—’Tis my lord come back from hunting—”
 And the Duchess claps her hands 40

Slow and tired, came the hunters—
 Stopp’d in darkness in the court
 “—Ho, this way, ye laggard hunters !
 To the hall ! What sport ? What sport ?”

Slow they enter’d with their master ,
 In the hall they laid him down.
 On his coat were leaves and blood-stains,
 On his brow an angry frown

Dead her princely youthful husband
 Lay before his youthful wife, 50
 Bloody, ’neath the flaring sconces—
 And the sight froze all her life.

In Vienna, by the Danube,
 Kings hold revel, gallants meet
 Gay of old amid the gayest
 Was the Duchess Marguerite.

In Vienna, by the Danube,
 Feast and dance her youth beguiled.
 Till that hour she never sorrow'd ,
 But from then she never smiled 60

'Mid the Savoy mountain valleys
 Far from town or haunt of man,
 Stands a lonely church, unfinish'd,
 Which the Duchess Maud began ;

Old, that Duchess stern began it,
 In gray age, with palsied hands ,
 But she died while it was building,
 And the Church unfinish'd stands—

Stands as erst the builders left it,
 When she sank into her grave , 70
 Mountain greensward paves the chancel,
 Harebells flower in the nave

“—In my castle all is sorrow,”
 Said the Duchess Marguerite then ,
 “Guide me, some one, to the mountain !
 We will build the Church again ”—

Sandall'd palmers, faring homeward,
 Austrian knights from Syria came
 “—Austrian wanderers bring, O warders !
 Homage to your Austrian Dame ”— 80

From the gate the warders answer'd .
 “—Gone, O knights, is she you knew !
 Dead our Duke, and gone his Duchess ,
 Seek her at the Church of Brou ! ”—

Austrian knights and march-worn palmers
 Climb the winding mountain-way—
 Reach the valley, where the Fabric
 Rises higher day by day

Stones are sawing, hammers ringing ,
 On the work the bright sun shines, 90
 In the Savoy mountain-meadows,
 By the stream, below the pines

On her palfrey white the Duchess
 Sate and watch'd her working train-
 Flemish carvers, Lombard guilders,
 German masons, smiths from Spain

Clad in black, on her white palfrey,
 Her old architect beside—
 There they found her in the mountains,
 Morn and noon and eventide 100

There she sate, and watch'd the builders,
 Till the Church was roof'd and done
 Last of all, the builders rear'd her
 In the nave a tomb of stone

On the tomb two forms they sculptured,
 Lifelike in the marble pale—
 One, the Duke in helm and armour ,
 One, the Duchess in her veil

Round the tomb the carved stone fretwork
 Was at Easter-tide put on. 110
 Then the Duchess closed her labours .
 And she died at the St John

II

The Church

Upon the glistening leaden roof
 Of the new Pile, the sunlight shines ;
 The stream goes leaping by.
 The hills are clothed with pines sun-proof ,

'Mid bright green fields, below the pines
 Stands the Church on high
 What Church is this, from men aloof?—
 'Tis the Church of Brou

At sunrise, from their dewy lair
 Crossing the stream, the kine are seen 10
 Round the wall to stay—
 The churchyard wall that clips the square
 Of open hill-sward fresh and green
 Where last year they lay
 But all things now are order'd fair
 Round the Church of Brou

On Sundays, at the matin-chime,
 The Alpine peasants, two and three,
 Climb up here to pray ,
 Burgheis and dames, at summer's prime, 20
 Ride out to church from Chambery,
 Dight with mantles gay
 But else it is a lonely time
 Round the Church of Brou

On Sundays, too, a priest doth come
 From the wall'd town beyond the pass,
 Down the mountain-way ,
 And then you hear the organ's hum,
 You hear the white-robed priest say mass,
 And the people pray 30
 But else the woods and fields are dumb
 Round the Church of Brou.

And after church, when mass is done,
 The people to the nave repair
 Round the tomb to stray ,
 And marvel at the Forms of stone,

And praise the chisell'd broderies rare—

Then they drop away

The princely Pair are left alone

In the Church of Brou

40

III.

The Tomb.

So rest, for ever rest, O princely Pair !

In your high church, 'mid the still mountain-air,

Where horn, and hound, and vassals, never come

Only the blessed Saints are smiling dumb,

From the rich painted windows of the nave,

On aisle, and transept, and your marble grave ,

Where thou, young Prince ! shalt never more arise

From the fringed mattress where thy Duchess lies,

On autumn-mornings, when the bugle sounds,

And ride across the drawbridge with thy hounds 10

To hunt the boar in the crisp woods till eve ;

And thou, O Princess ! shalt no more receive,

Thou and thy ladies, in the hall of state,

The jaded hunters with their bloody freight,

Coming benighted to the castle-gate

So sleep, for ever sleep, O marble Pair !

O, if ye wake, let it be then, when fair

On the carved western front a flood of light

Streams from the setting sun, and colours bright

Prophets, transfigured Saints, and Martyrs brave, 20

In the vast western window of the nave ,

And on the pavement round the Tomb there glints

A chequer-work of glowing sapphire-tints,

And amethyst, and ruby—then uncloset

Your eyelids on the stone where ye repose,

And from your broder'd pillows lift your heads,

And rise upon your cold white marble beds ,

And, looking down on the warm rosy tints,
 Which chequer, at your feet, the illumined flints,
 Say *What is this? we are in bliss—forgiven—* 30
Behold the pavement of the courts of Heaven!
 Or let it be on autumn nights, when rain
 Doth rustlingly above your heads complain
 On the smooth leaden roof, and on the walls
 Shedding her pensive light at intervals
 The moon through the clere-story windows shines,
 And the wind washes through the mountain-pines.
 Then, gazing up 'mid the dim pillais high,
 The foliaged marble forest where ye lie,
Hush, ye will say, it is eternity! 40
This is the glimmering verge of Heaven, and these
The columns of the heavenly palaces!
 And, in the sweeping of the wind, your ear
 The passage of the Angels' wings will hear,
 And on the lichen-crusteds leads above
 The rustle of the eternal rain of love

REQUIESCAT

STREW on her roses, roses,
 And never a spray of yew!
 In quiet she reposes,
 Ah, would that I did too!

 Her mirth the world required,
 She bathed it in smiles of glee
 But her heart was tired, tired,
 And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
 In mazes of heat and sound, 10
 But for peace her soul was yearning,
 And now peace laps her round.

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death

TO A GIPSY CHILD BY THE SEA-SHORE

DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN

Who taught this pleading to unpractised eyes ?
Who had such import in an infant's gloom ?
Who lent thee, child, this meditative guise ?
Who mass'd, round that slight brow, these clouds of doom ?

Lo ! sails that gleam a moment and are gone ,
The swinging waters, and the cluster'd pier
Not idly Earth and Ocean labour on,
Nor idly do these sea-birds hover near

But thou, whom superfluity of joy
Wafts not from thine own thoughts, nor longings vain, 10
Nor weariness, the full-fed soul's annoy—
Remaining in thy hunger and thy pain ,

Thou, drugging pain by patience , half averse
From thine own mother's breast, that knows not thee ,
With eyes which sought thine eyes thou didst converse,
And that soul-searching vision fell on me

Glooms that go deep as thine I have not known .
Moods of fantastic sadness, nothing worth
Thy sorrow and thy calmness are thine own
Glooms that enhance and glorify this earth. 20

What mood wears like complexion to thy woe ?
His, who in mountain glens, at noon of day,
Sits rapt, and hears the battle break below ?
—Ah ! thine was not the shelter, but the fray

Some exile's, mindful how the past was glad ?
 Some angel's, in an alien planet born ?
 —No exile's dream was ever half so sad,
 Nor any angel's sorrow so forlorn

Is the calm thine of stoic souls, who weigh
 Life well, and find it wanting, nor deplore , 30
 But in disdainful silence turn away,
 Stand mute, self-centred, stern, and dream no more ?

Or do I wait, to hear some gray-hair'd king
 Unravel all his many-colour'd lore ,
 Whose mind hath known all arts of governing,
 Mused much, loved life a little, loathed it more ?

Down the pale cheek long lines of shadow slope,
 Which years, and curious thought, and suffering give
 —Thou hast foreknown the vanity of hope,
 Foreseen thy harvest—yet proceed'st to live 40

O meek anticipant of that sure pain
 Whose sureness gray-hair'd scholars hardly learn !
 What wonder shall time breed, to swell thy strain ?
 What heavens, what earth, what sun shalt thou discern ?

Ere the long night, whose stillness brooks no star,
 Match that funereal aspect with her pall,
 I think, thou wilt have fathom'd life too far,
 Have known too much—or else forgotten all

The Guide of our dark steps a triple veil
 Betwixt our senses and our sorrow keeps , 50
 Hath sown with cloudless passages the tale
 Of grief, and eased us with a thousand sleeps.

Ah ! not the nectarous poppy lovers use,
 Not daily labour's dull, Lethæan spring,
 Oblivion in lost angels can infuse
 Of the soul'd glory, and the trailing wing

And though thou glean, what strenuous gleaners may,
In the throng'd fields where winning comes by strife ,
And though the just sun gild, as mortals pray,
Some reaches of thy storm-vest stream of life ; 60

Though that blank sunshine blind thee ; though the cloud
That sever'd the world's march and thine, be gone ,
Though ease dulls grace, and Wisdom be too proud
To halve a lodging that was all her own—

Once, ere the day decline, thou shalt discern,
Oh once, ere night, in thy success, thy chain '
Ere the long evening close, thou shalt return,
And wear this majesty of grief again

NARRATIVE POEMS.

BALDER DEAD

I.

Scnding

So on the floor lay Balder dead , and round
Lay thickly strewn swords, axes, darts, and spears,
Which all the Gods in sport had idly thrown
At Balder, whom no weapon pierced or clove ,
But in his breast stood fixt the fatal bough
Of mistletoe, which Lok the Accuser gave
To Hoder, and unwitting Hoder threw—
'Gainst that alone had Balder's life no charm

And all the Gods and all the Heroes came,
And stood round Balder on the bloody floor, 10
Weeping and wailing , and Valhalla rang
Up to its golden roof with sobs and cries ;
And on the tables stood the untasted meats,
And in the horns and gold-rimm'd skulls the wine
And now would night have fall'n, and found them yet
Wailing , but otherwise was Odin's will
And thus the Father of the ages spake —

“ Enough of tears, ye Gods, enough of wail !
Not to lament in was Valhalla made.
If any here might weep for Balder's death, 20

I most might weep, his father, such a son
 I lose to-day, so bright, so loved a God
 But he has met that doom, which long ago
 The Normies, when his mother bare him, spun,
 And fate set seal that so his end must be
 Balder has met his death, and ye survive—
 Weep him an hour, but what can grief avail?
 For ye yourselves, ye Gods, shall meet your doom,
 All ye who hear me, and inhabit Heaven,
 And I too, Odin too, the Lord of all 30
 But ours we shall not meet, when that day comes,
 With women's tears and weak complaining cries—
 Why should we meet another's portion so?
 Rather it fits you, having wept your hour,
 With cold dry eyes, and hearts composed and stern,
 To live, as erst, your daily life in Heaven
 By me shall vengeance on the murderer Lok,
 The foe, the accuser, whom, though Gods, we hate,
 Be strictly cared for, in the appointed day
 Meanwhile, to-morrow, when the morning dawns, 40
 Bring wood to the seashore to Balder's ship,
 And on the deck build high a funeral-pile,
 And on the top lay Balder's corpse, and put
 Fire to the wood, and send him out to sea
 To burn, for that is what the dead desire"

So spake the King of Gods, and straightway rose,
 And mounted his horse Sleipner, whom he rode;
 And from the hall of Heaven he rode away
 To Lidskialf, and sate upon his throne,
 The mount, from whence his eye surveys the world 50
 And far from Heaven he turn'd his shining orbs
 To look on Midgard, and the earth, and men
 And on the conjuring Lapps he bent his gaze
 Whom antler'd reindeer pull over the snow;
 And on the Finns, the gentlest of mankind,
 Fair men, who live in holes under the ground;

Nor did he look once more to Ida's plain,
Nor tow'd Valhalla, and the sorrowing Gods ,
For well he knew the Gods would heed his word,
And cease to mourn, and think of Balder's pyre 60

But in Valhalla all the Gods went back
From around Balder, all the Heroes went ,
And left his body stretch'd upon the floor
And on their golden chairs they sate again,
Beside the tables, in the hall of Heaven ,
And before each the cooks who served them placed
New messes of the boar Serimner's flesh,
And the Valkyries crown'd their horns with mead
So they, with pent-up hearts and tearless eyes,
Wailing no more, in silence ate and drank, 70
While twilight fell, and sacred night came on

But the blind Hoder left the feasting Gods
In Odm's hall, and went through Asgard streets,
And past the haven where the Gods have moor'd
Their ships, and through the gate, beyond the wall ,
Though sightless, yet his own mind led the God.
Down to the margin of the roaring sea
He came, and sadly went along the sand,
Between the waves and black o'erhanging cliffs
Where in and out the screaming seafowl fly , 80
Until he came to where a gully breaks
Through the cliff-wall, and a fresh stream runs down
From the high moors behind, and meets the sea
There, in the glen, Fensaler stands, the house
Of Frea, honour'd mother of the Gods,
And shows its lighted windows to the main
There he went up, and pass'd the open doors ,
And in the hall he found those women old,
The prophetesses, who by rite eterne
On Frea's hearth feed high the sacred fire 90
Both night and day , and by the inner wall
Upon her golden chair the Mother sate,

With folded hands, revolving things to come
To her drew Hoder near, and spake, and said .—

“Mother, a child of bale thou bar’st in me !
For, first, thou barest me with blinded eyes,
Sightless and helpless, wandering weak in Heaven ,
And, after that, of ignorant witless mind
Thou barest me, and unforeseeing soul ,
That I alone must take the branch from Lok, 100
The foe, the accuser, whom, though Gods, we hate,
And cast it at the dear-loved Balder’s breast
At whom the Gods in sport their weapons threw—
’Gainst that alone had Balder’s life no charm.
Now therefore what to attempt, or whither fly,
For who will bear my hateful sight in Heaven ?
Can I, O mother, bring them Balder back ?
Or—for thou know’st the fates, and things allow’d—
Can I with Hela’s power a compact strike,
And make exchange, and give my life for his ?” 110

He spoke the mother of the Gods replied .—
“Hoder, ill-fated, child of bale, my son,
Sightless in soul and eye, what words are these ?
That one, long portion’d with his doom of death,
Should change his lot, and fill another’s life,
And Hela yield to this, and let him go !
On Balder Death hath laid her hand, not thee ,
Nor doth she count this life a price for that
For many Gods in Heaven, not thou alone,
Would freely die to purchase Balder back, 120
And wend themselves to Hela’s gloomy realm
For not so gladsome is that life in Heaven
Which Gods and heroes leav’, in feast and fray,
Waiting the darkness of the final times,
That one should grudge its loss for Balder’s sake,
Balder their joy, so bright, so loved a God
But fate withstands, and laws forbid this way
Yet in my secret mind one way I know,

Nor do I judge if it shall win or fail ,
 But much must still be tried, which shall but fail " 130

And the blind Hoder answer'd her, and said : —
 " What way is this, O mother, that thou show'st ?
 Is it a matter which a God might try ? "

And straight the mother of the Gods replied —
 " There is a road which leads to Hela's realm,
 Untrodden, lonely, far from light and Heaven
 Who goes that way must take no other hoise
 To ride, but Sleipner, Odin's hoise, alone
 Nor must he choose that common path of Gods
 Which every day they come and go in Heaven, 140

O'er the bridge Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
 Past Midgard fortress, down to earth and men
 But he must tread a dark untravell'd road
 Which branches from the north of Heaven, and ride
 Nine days, nine nights, toward the northern ice,
 Through valleys deep-engulph'd, with roaring streams
 And he will reach on the tenth morn a bridge
 Which spans with golden arches Giall's stream,
 Not Bifrost, but that bridge a damsel keeps,
 Who tells the passing troops of dead their way 150
 To the low shore of ghosts, and Hela's realm
 And she will bid him northward steer his course
 Then he will journey through no lighted land,
 Nor see the sun arise, nor see it set ,

But he must ever watch the northern Bear,
 Who from her frozen height with jealous eye
 Confronts the Dog and Hunter in the south.
 And is alone not dipt in Ocean's stream
 And straight he will come down to Ocean's strand—
 Ocean, whose watery ring enfolds the world, 160
 And on whose marge the ancient giants dwell
 But he will reach its unknown northern shore,
 Far, far beyond the outmost giant's home,
 At the chink'd fields of ice, the waste of snow,

And he must fare across the dismal ice
 Northward, until he meets a stretching wall
 Barring his way, and in the wall a grate
 But then he must dismount, and on the ice
 Tighten the girths of Sleipner, Odin's horse,
 And make him leap the grate, and come within 170
 And he will see stretch round him Hela's realm,
 The plains of Nifheim, where dwell the dead,
 And hear the roaring of the streams of Hell.
 And he will see the feeble, shadowy tribes,
 And Balder sitting crown'd, and Hela's throne
 Then must he not regard the wailful ghosts
 Who all will flit, like eddying leaves, around,
 But he must straight accost their solemn queen,
 And pay her homage, and entreat with prayers,
 Telling her all that grief they have in Heaven 180
 For Balder, whom she holds by right below,
 If haply he may melt her heart with words,
 And make her yield, and give him Balder back."
 She spoke, but Hoder answer'd her and said ---
 "Mother, a dreadful way is this thou show'st;
 No journey for a sightless God to go!"
 And straight the mother of the Gods replied ---
 "Therefore thyself thou shalt not go, my son
 But he whom first thou meetest when thou com'st
 To Asgard, and declar'st this hidden way, 190
 Shall go; and I will be his gunde unseen."
 She spoke, and on her face let fall her veil,
 And bow'd her head, and sate with folded hands,
 But at the central hearth those women old,
 Who while the Mother spake had ceased their toil,
 Began again to heap the sacred fire
 And Hoder turn'd, and left his mother's house,
 Fensaler, whose lit windows look to sea,
 And came again down to the roaring waves,
 And back along the beach to Asgard went, 200

Pondering on that which Frea said should be

But night came down, and darken'd Asgard streets :

Then from their loathéd feasts the Gods arose,

And lighted torches, and took up the corpse

Of Balder from the floor of Odin's hall,

And laid it on a bier, and bare him home

Through the fast-darkening streets to his own house,

Breidablik, on whose columns Balder graved

The enchantments that recall the dead to life

For wise he was, and many curious arts,

210

Postures of runes, and healing herbs he knew ,

Unhappy ! but that art he did not know,

To keep his own life safe, and see the sun

There to his hall the Gods brought Balder home,

And each bespoke him as he laid him down —

“Would that ourselves, O Balder, we were borne

Home to our halls, with torchlight, by our kin,

So thou might'st live, and still delight the Gods !”

They spake , and each went home to his own house

But there was one, the first of all the Gods

220

For speed, and Hermod was his name in Heaven ;

Most fleet he was, but now he went the last,

Heavy in heart for Balder, to his house,

Which he in Asgard built him, there to dwell,

Against the harbour, by the city-wall

Him the blind Hoder met, as he came up

From the sea cityward, and knew his step ,

Not yet could Hermod see his brother's face,

For it grew dark , but Hoder touch'd his arm

And as a spray of honeysuckle flowers

230

Bushes across a tired traveller's face

Who shuffles through the deep dew-moisten'd dust,

On a May evening, in the darken'd lanes,

And starts him, that he thinks a ghost went by—

So Hoder bush'd by Hermod's side, and said —

“Take Sleipner, Hermod, and set forth with dawn

To Hela's kingdom, to ask Balder back ,
And they shall be thy guides, who have the power "

He spake, and brush'd soft by, and disappeared
And Hermod gazed into the night, and said — 240

" Who is it utters through the dark his hest
So quickly, and will wait for no reply ?

The voice was like the unhappy Hoder's voice
Howbeit I will see, and do his hest ,
For there rang note divine in that command "

So speaking, the fleet-footed Hermod came
Home, and lay down to sleep in his own house ;
And all the Gods lay down in their own homes
And Hoder too came home, distraught with grief,
Loathing to meet, at dawn, the other Gods , 250
And he went in, and shut the door, and fixt
His sword upright, and fell on it, and died

But from the hill of Lidskialf Odin rose,
The throne, from which his eye surveys the world ,
And mounted Sleipner, and in darkness rode
To Asgard And the stars came out in heaven,
High over Asgard, to light home the King
But fiercely Odin gallop'd, moved in heart ,
And swift to Asgard, to the gate, he came
And terribly the hoofs of Sleipner rang 260
Along the flinty floor of Asgard streets,
And the Gods trembled on their golden beds
Hearing the wrathful Father coming home—
For dread, for like a whirlwind, Odin came
And to Valhalla's gate he rode, and left
Sleipner ; and Sleipner went to his own stall ,
And in Valhalla Odin laid him down

But in Breidablik, Nanna, Balder's wife,
Came with the Goddesses who wrought her will,
And stood by Balder lying on his bier 270
And at his head and feet she station'd Scalds
Who in their lives were famous for their song ;

These o'er the corpse intoned a plaintive strain,
 A dirge—and Nanna and her train replied
 And far into the night they wail'd their dirge
 But when their souls were satisfied with wail,
 They went, and laid them down, and Nanna went
 Into an upper chamber, and lay down,
 And Frea seal'd her tired lids with sleep

And 'twas when night is bordering hard on dawn, 280
 When air is chilliest, and the stars sunk low,
 Then Balder's spirit through the gloom drew near,
 In garb, in form, in feature as he was,
 Alive; and still the rays were round his head
 Which were his glorious mark in Heaven, he stood
 Over against the curtain of the bed,
 And gazed on Nanna as she slept, and spake —

“Poor lamb, thou sleepest, and forgett'st thy woe!
 Tears stand upon the lashes of thine eyes,
 Tears wet the pillow by thy cheek, but thou, 290
 Like a young child, hast cried thyself to sleep
 Sleep on; I watch thee, and am here to aid
 Alive I kept not far from thee, dear soul!
 Neither do I neglect thee now, though dead
 For with to-morrow's dawn the Gods prepare
 To gather wood, and build a funeral-pile
 Upon my ship, and burn my corpse with fire,
 That sad, sole honour of the dead, and thee
 They think to burn, and all my choicest wealth,
 With me, for thus ordains the common rite 300
 But it shall not be so, but mild, but swift,
 But painless shall a stroke from Frea come,
 To cut thy thread of life, and free thy soul,
 And they shall burn thy corpse with mine, not thee
 And well I know that by no stroke of death,
 Tardy or swift, would'st thou be loath to die,
So it restored thee, Nanna, to my side,
 Whom thou so well hast loved, but I can smooth

Thy way, and this, at least, my prayers avail
Yes, and I fain would altogether ward 310
Death from thy head, and with the Gods in Heaven
Prolong thy life, though not by thee desired—
But right bars this, not only thy desire
Yet dreary, Nanna, is the life they lead
In that dim world, in Hela's mouldering realm ;
And doleful are the ghosts, the troops of dead,
Whom Hela with austere control presides
For of the race of Gods is no one there,
Save me alone, and Hela, solemn queen ,
And all the nobler souls of mortal men 320
On battle-field have met their death, and now
Feast in Valhalla, in my father's hall ,
Only the inglorious sort are there below,
The old, the cowards, and the weak are there—
Men spent by sickness, or obscure decay
But even there, O Nanna, we might find
Some solace in each other's look and speech,
Wandering together through that gloomy world,
And talking of the life we led in Heaven,
While we yet lived, among the other Gods " 330
He spake, and straight his hueaments began
To fade , and Nanna in her sleep stretch'd out
Her arms towards him with a cry—but he
Mournfully shook his head, and disappear'd
And as the woodman sees a little smoke
Hang in the air, afield, and disappear,
So Balder faded in the night away
And Nanna on her bed sank back , but then
Frea, the mother of the Gods, with stroke
Painless and swift, set free her airy soul, 340
Which took, on Balder's track, the way below ;
And instantly the sacred morn appear'd.

II

Journey to the Dead.

FORTH from the east, up the ascent of Heaven,
 Day drove his couiser with the shining mane ,
 And in Valhalla, from his gable-perch,
 The golden-crested cock began to crow
 Hereafter, in the blackest dead of night,
 With shrill and dismal cries that bud shall crow,
 Warning the Gods that foes draw nigh to Heaven ,
 But now he crew at dawn, a cheerful note,
 To wake the Gods and Heroes to their tasks
 And all the Gods, and all the Heroes, woke 10
 And from their beds the Heroes rose, and down'd
 Their arms, and led their horses from the stall,
 And mounted them, and in Valhalla's court
 Were ranged , and then the daily fray began.
 And all day long they there are hack'd and hewn,
 'Mid dust, and groans, and limbs lopp'd off, and blood ,
 But all at night return to Odin's hall,
 Woundless and fresh , such lot is theirs in Heaven
 And the Valkyries on their steeds went forth
 Tow'rd earth and fights of men , and at their side 20
 Skulda, the youngest of the Normes, rode ,
 And over Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
 Past Midgard fortress, down to earth they came ,
 There through some battle-field, where men fall fast,
 Their horses fetlock-deep in blood, they ride,
 And pick the bravest warriors out for death,
 Whom they bring back with them at night to Heaven
 To glad the Gods, and feast in Odin's hall
 But the Gods went not now, as otherwhile,
 Into the tilt-yard, where the Heroes fought, 30
 To feast their eyes with looking on the fray ;
 Nor did they to their judgment-place repair

By the ash Igdrasil, in Ida's plain,
 Where they hold council, and give laws for men
 But they went, Odin first, the rest behind,
 To the hall Gladheim, which is built of gold,
 Where are in circle ranged twelve golden chairs,
 And in the midst one higher, Odin's throne
 There all the Gods in silence sate them down,
 And thus the Father of the ages spake — 40

“Go quickly, Gods, bring wood to the seashore,
 With all, which it besecms the dead to have,
 And make a funeral-pile on Balder's ship,
 On the twelfth day the Gods shall burn his corpse
 But Hermod, thou take Slepner, and ride down
 To Hela's kingdom, to ask Balder back”

So said he, and the Gods arose, and took
 Axes and ropes, and at their head came Thor,
 Shouldering his hammer, which the giants know
 Forth wended they, and drave their steeds before 50
 And up the dewy mountain-tracks they fared
 To the dark forests, in the early dawn,
 And up and down, and side and slant they roam'd
 And from the glens all day an echo came
 Of crashing falls, for with his hammer Thor
 Smote 'mid the rocks the lichen-bearded pines,
 And burst their roots, while to their tops the Gods
 Made fast the woven ropes, and haled them down,
 And lopp'd their boughs, and clove them on the sward,
 And bound the logs behind their steeds to draw, 60
 And drave them homeward; and the snorting steeds
 Went straining through the crackling brushwood down,
 And by the darkling forest-paths the Gods
 Follow'd, and on their shoulders carried boughs
 And they came out upon the plain, and pass'd
 Asgard, and led their horses to the beach,
 And loosed them of their loads on the seashore,
 And ranged the wood in stacks by Balder's ship;

And every God went home to his own house
 But when the Gods were to the forest gone, 70
 Heimdall led Sleipner from Valhalla forth
 And saddled him, before that, Sleipner brook'd
 No meaner hand than Odin's on his mane,
 On his broad back no lesser rider bore,
 Yet docile now he stood at Heimdall's side,
 Aching his neck, and glad to be bestrode,
 Knowing the God they went to seek, how dear
 But Heimdall mounted him, and sadly fared
 In silence up the dark untravell'd road
 Which branches from the north of Heaven, and went 80
 All day; and daylight waned, and night came on
 And all that night he rode, and journey'd so,
 Nine days, nine nights, toward the northern ice,
 Through valleys deep-engulph'd, by roaring streams
 And on the tenth morn he beheld the bridge
 Which spans with golden arches Giall's stream,
 And on the bridge a damsel watching arm'd,
 In the strait passage, at the farther end,
 Where the road issues between walling rocks
 Scant space that warden left for passers by,— 90
 But as when cowherds in October drive
 Their kine across a snowy mountain-pass
 To winter-pasture on the southern side,
 And on the ridge a waggon chokes the way,
 Wedged in the snow, then painfully the hinds
 With goad and shouting urge their cattle past,
 Plunging through deep untrodden banks of snow
 To right and left, and warm steam fills the air—
 So on the bridge that damsel block'd the way,
 And question'd Heimdall as he came, and said — 100
 "Who art thou on thy black and fiery horse
 Under whose hoofs the bridge o'er Giall's stream
 Rumbles and shakes? Tell me thy race and home.
 But yesternorn five troops of dead pass'd by,

Bound on their way below to Hela's realm,
 Nor shook the bridge so much as thou alone
 And thou hast flesh and colour on thy cheeks,
 Like men who live, and draw the vital air ,
 Nor look'st thou pale and wan, like men deceased,
 Souls bound below, my daily passers here " 110

And the fleet-footed Hermod answer'd her —
 " O damsel, Hermod am I call'd, the son
 Of Odin , and my high-roof'd house is built
 Far hence, in Asgard, in the city of Gods ,
 And Sleipner, Odin's horse, is thus I ride
 And I come, sent this road on Balder's track ,
 Say then, if he hath cross'd thy bridge or no ?"

He spake , the warder of the bridge replied —
 " O Hermod, rarely do the feet of Gods
 Or of the horses of the Gods resound 120
 Upon my bridge ; and, when they cross, I know
 Balder hath gone this way, and ta'en the road
 Below there, to the north, tow'rd Hela's realm
 From here the cold white mist can be discern'd,
 Nor lit with sun, but through the darksome air
 By the dim vapour-blotted light of stars,
 Which hangs over the ice where lies the road
 For in that ice are lost those northern streams,
 Freezing and ridging in their onward flow,
 Which from the fountain of Vergelmer run, 130
 The spring that bubbles up by Hela's throne
 There are the joyless seats, the haunt of ghosts,
 Hela's pale swarms , and there was Balder bound
 Ride on ' pass free ' but he by this is there "

She spake, and stepp'd aside, and left him room
 And Hermod greeted her, and gallop'd by
 Across the bridge ; then she took post again
 But northward Hermod rode, the way below ;
 And o'er a darksome tract, which knows no sun,
 But by the blotted light of stars, he fared. 140

And he came down to Ocean's northern strand,
 At the dread ice, beyond the giants' home
 Thence on he journey'd o'er the fields of ice
 Still north, until he met a stretching wall
 Barring his way, and in the wall a grate
 Then he dismounted, and drew tight the girths,
 On the smooth ice, of Sleipner, Odin's horse,
 And made him leap the grate, and came within
 And he beheld spread round him Hela's realm,
 The plains of Nifheim, where dwell the dead, 150
 And heard the thunder of the streams of Hell
 For near the wall the river of Roaring flows,
 Outmost, the others near the centre run—
 The Storm, the Abyss, the Howling, and the Pan,
 These flow by Hela's throne, and near their spring
 And from the dark flock'd up the shadowy tribes,—
 And as the swallows crowd the bulrush-beds
 ' Of some clear river, issuing from a lake,
 On autumn-days, before they cross the sea,
 And to each bulrush-crest a swallow hangs 160
 Quivering, and others skim the river-streams,
 And their quick twittering fills the banks and shores—
 So around Hermod swarm'd the twittering ghosts
 Women, and infants, and young men who died
 Too soon for fame, with white ungraven shields,
 And old men, known to glory, but their star
 Betray'd them, and of wasting age they died,
 Not wounds, yet, dying, they their armour wore,
 And now have chief regard in Hela's realm
 Behind flock'd wrangling up a piteous crew, 170
 Greeted of none, disfeatured and forlorn—
 Cowards, who were in sloughs interr'd alive;
 And round them still the wattled hurdles hung,
 Wherewith they stamp'd them down, and trod them deep,
 To hide their shameful memory from men.
 But all he pass'd unhal'd, and reach'd the throne

Of Hela, and saw, near it Balder crown'd,
 And Hela set thereon, with countenance stein,
 And thus bespake him first the solemn queen —

“Unhappy, how hast thou endured to leave 180
 The light, and journey to the cheerless land
 Where idly flit about the feeble shades?

How didst thou cross the bridge o'er Choll's stream,
 Being alive, and come to Ocean's shore?
 Or how o'erleap the grate that bars the wall?”

She spake but down off Sleiþner Hermod sprang,
 And fell before her feet, and clasp'd her knees,
 And spake, and mild outreated her, and said —

“O Hela, wherefore should the Gods declare
 Their errands to each other, or the ways 190

They go? the errand and the way is known.
 Thou know'st, thou know'st, what grief we have in Heaven
 For Balder, whom thou hold'st by right below.
 Restore him! for what part fulfils he here?

Shall he shed cheer over the cheerless seats,
 And touch the apathetic ghosts with joy?
 Not for such end, O queen, thou hold'st thy realm
 For Heaven was Balder born, the city of Gods
 And Heroes, where they live in light and joy.
 Thither restore him, for his place is there!” 200

He spoke, and grave replied the solemn queen —
 “Hermod, for he thou art, thou son of Heaven!

A strange unlikely errand, sure, is thine.
 Do the Gods send to me to make them blest?
 Small bliss my race hath of the Gods obtained.

Three mighty children to my father Lok
 Did Augerbode, the giantess, bring forth—
 Fenris the wolf, the Serpent huge, and me.
 Of these the Serpent in the sea ye cast,
 Who since in your despite hath wax'd amain, 210
 And now with gleaming ring enfolds the world,
 Me on this cheerless nether world ye threw,

And gave me nine unlighted realms to rule ,
 While on his island in the lake afar,
 Made fast to the bored crag, by wile not strength
 Subdued, with limber chains lives Fenris bound.
 Lok still subsists in Heaven, our father wise,
 Your mate, though loathed, and feasts in Odin's hall ,
 But him too foes await, and netted snares,
 And in a cave a bed of needle-rocks, 220
 And o'er his visage serpents dropping gall
 Yet he shall one day rise, and burst his bonds,
 And with himself set us his offspring free,
 When he guides Muspel's children to their bourne.
 Till then in peril or in pain we live,
 Wrought by the Gods—and ask the Gods our aid ?
 Howbeit, we abide our day , till then,
 We do not as some feeblers haters do—
 Seek to afflict our foes with petty pangs,
 Helpless to better us, or ruin them 230
 Come then ! if Balder was so dear beloved,
 And this is true, and such a loss is Heaven's—
 Hear, how to Heaven may Balder be restored
 Show me through all the world the signs of grief !
 Fails but one thing to grieve, here Balder stops !
 Let all that lives and moves upon the earth
 Weep him, and all that is without life weep ;
 Let Gods, men, brutes, bewep him , plants and stones !
 So shall I know the lost was dear indeed,
 And bend my heart, and give him back to Heaven ” 240
 She spake ; and Hermod answer'd her, and said :—
 “ Hela, such as thou say'st, the terms shall be
 But come, declare me this, and truly tell
 May I, ere I depart, bid Balder hail,
 Or is it here withheld to greet the dead ? ”
 He spake, and straightway Hela answered him .—
 “ Hermod, greet Balder if thou wilt, and hold
 Converse , his speech remains, though he be dead ”

And straight to Balder Hermod turn'd, and spake —
 "Even in the abode of death, O Balder, hail ! 250
 Thou hear'st, if hearing, like as speech, is thine,
 The terms of thy releasement hence to Heaven,
 Fear nothing but that all shall be fulfill'd
 For not unmindful of thee are the Gods,
 Who see the light, and blest in Asgard dwell,
 Even here they seek thee out, in Hela's realm
 And sure of all the happiest far art thou
 Who ever have been known in earth or Heaven,
 Alive, thou wast of Gods the most beloved,
 And now thou sittest crown'd by Hela's side, 260
 Here, and hast honour among all the dead "

He spake, and Balder utter'd him reply,
 But feebly, as a voice far off, he said —
 "Hermod the nimble, gild me not my death !
 Better to live a serf, a captured man,
 Who scatters rushes in a master's hall,
 Than be a crown'd king here, and rule the dead
 And now I count not of these terms as safe
 To be fulfill'd, nor my return as sure,
 Though I be loved, and many mourn my death ; 270
 For double-minded ever was the seed
 Of Lok, and double are the gifts they give
 Howbeit, report thy message, and therewith,
 To Odin, to my father, take this ring,
 Memorial of me, whether saved or no,
 And tell the Heaven-born Gods how thou hast seen
 Me sitting here below by Hela's side,
 Crown'd, having honour among all the dead "

He spake, and raised his hand, and gave the ring
 And with inscrutable regard the queen 280
 Of Hell beheld them, and the ghosts stood dumb
 But Hermod took the ring, and yet once more
 Kneel'd and did homage to the solemn queen,
 Then mounted Sleipner, and set forth to ride

Back, through the astonish'd tribes of dead, to Heaven
 And to the wall he came, and found the grate
 Lifted, and issued on the fields of ice
 And o'er the ice he fared to Ocean's strand,
 And up from thence, a wet and misty road,
 To the arm'd damsel's bridge, and Giall's stream 290
 Worse was that way to go than to return,
 For him,—for others all return is bar'd
 Nine days he took to go, two to return,
 And on the twelfth morn saw the light of Heaven.
 And as a traveller in the early dawn
 To the steep edge of some great valley comes,
 Through which a river flows, and sees, beneath,
 Clouds of white rolling vapours fill the vale,
 But o'er them, on the farther slope, descends
 Vineyards, and crofts, and pastures, bright with sun--
 So, Hermod, o'er the fog between, saw Heaven 301
 And Slepner snorted, for he smelt the air
 Of Heaven, and mightily, as wing'd, he flew
 And Hermod saw the towers of Asgard rise,
 And he drew near, and heard no living voice
 In Asgard, and the golden halls were dumb
 Then Hermod knew what labour held the Gods;
 And through the empty streets he rode, and pass'd
 Under the gate-house to the sands, and found
 The Gods on the sea-shore by Balder's ship 310

III

Funeral

THE Gods held talk together, group'd in knots,
 Round Balder's corpse, which they had thither borne;
 And Hermod came down tow'rds them from the gate
 And Lok, the father of the serpent, first
 Beheld him come, and to his neighbour spake —

"See, here is Hermod, who comes single back
 From Hell ; and shall I tell thee how he seems ?
 Like as a farmer, who hath lost his dog,
 Some morn, at market, in a crowded town—
 Through many streets the poor beast runs in vain, 10
 And follows this man after that, for hours ,
 And, late at evening, spent and panting, falls
 Before a stranger's threshold, not his home,
 With flanks a-tremble, and his slender tongue
 Hangs quivering out between his dust-smear'd jaws,
 And piteously he eyes the passers by ,
 But home his master comes to his own farm,
 Far in the country, wondering where he is—
 So Hermod comes to-day unfollow'd home "

And straight his neighbour, moved with wrath, replied —
 "Deceiver ! fair in form, but false in heart ! 21
 Enemy, mocker, whom, though Gods, we hate —
 Peace, lest our father Odin hear thee gibe !
 Would I might see him snatch thee in his hand,
 And bind thy carcase, like a bale, with cords,
 And hurl thee in a lake, to sink or swim !
 If clear from plotting Balder's death, to swim ,
 But deep, if thou devis'dst it, to drown,
 And perish, against fate, before thy day "

So they two soft to one another spake 30
 But Odin look'd toward the land, and saw
 His messenger ; and he stood forth, and cried
 And Hermod came, and leapt from Sleipner down,
 And in his father's hand put Sleipner's rein,
 And greeted Odin and the Gods, and said —

"Odin, my father, and ye, Gods of Heaven !
 Lo, home, having perform'd your will, I come
 Into the joyless kingdom have I been,
 Below, and look'd upon the shadowy tribes
 Of ghosts, and communed with their solemn queen , 40
 And to your prayer she sends you this reply

*Show her through all the world the signs of grief !
Fails but one thing to grieve, there Balder stops !
Let Gods, men, brutes, beweeep him , plants and stones .
So shall she know your loss was dear indeed,
And bend her heart, and give you Balder back "*

He spoke , and all the Gods to Odin look'd ,
And straight the Father of the ages said —

" Ye Gods, these teims may keep another day
But now, put on your arms, and mount your steeds, 50
And in procession all come near, and weep
Balder , for that is what the dead desire
When ye enough have wept, then build a pile
Of the heap'd wood, and burn his corpse with fire
Out of our sight , that we may turn from grief,
And lead, as erst, our daily life in Heaven "

He spoke, and the Gods arm'd , and Odin donn'd
His dazzling corslet and his helm of gold,
And led the way on Sleipner , and the rest
Follow'd, in tears, their father and their king 60
And thence in arms around the dead they rode,
Weeping , the sands were wetted, and their arms,
With their thick-falling tears—so good a friend
They mourn'd that day, so bright, so loved a God
And Odin came, and laid his kingly hands
On Balder's breast, and thus began the wail —

" Farewell, O Balder, bright and loved, my son !
In that great day, the twilight of the Gods,
When Muspel's children shall beleaguer Heaven,
Then we shall miss thy counsel and thy arm " 70

Thou camest near the next, O warrior Thor !
Shouldering thy hammer, in thy chariot drawn,
Swaying the long-hair'd goats with silver'd rein ,
And over Balder's corpse these words didst say —

" Brother, thou dwellest in the darksome land,
And talkest with the feeble tribes of ghosts,
Now, and I know not how they prize thee there—

But here, I know, thou wilt be miss'd and mourn'd
 For haughty spirits and high wraths are rife
 Among the Gods and Heroes here in Heaven, 80
 As among those whose joy and work is war,
 And daily strifes arise, and angry words
 But from thy lips, O Balder, night or day,
 Heard no one ever an injurious word
 To God or Hero, but thou keptest back
 The others, labouring to compose their brawls.
 Be ye then kind, as Balder too was kind !
 For we lose him, who smoothed all strife in Heaven "

He spake, and all the Gods assenting wail'd
 And Freya next came nigh, with golden tears, 90
 The loveliest Goddess she in Heaven, by all
 Most honour'd after Frea, Odinn's wife
 Her long ago the wandering Oder took
 To mate, but left her to roam distant lands,
 Since then she seeks him, and weeps tears of gold
 Names hath she many, Vanadis on earth
 They call her, Freya is her name in Heaven,
 She in her hands took Balder's head, and spake —

"Balder, my brother, thou art gone a road
 Unknown and long, and haply on that way 100
 My long-lost wandering Oder thou hast met,
 For in the paths of Heaven he is not found
 Oh, if it be so, tell him what thou wast
 To his neglected wife, and what he is,
 And wring his heart with shame, to hear thy word !
 For he, my husband, left me here to pine,
 Not long a wife, when his unquiet heart
 First drove him from me into distant lands,
 Since then I vainly seek him through the world,
 And weep from shore to shore my golden tears, 110
 But neither god nor mortal heeds my pain
 Thou only, Balder, wast for ever kind,
 To take my hand, and wipe my tears, and say :

*Weep not, O Freya, weep no golden tears !
 One day the wandering Oder will return,
 Or thou wilt find him in thy faithful search
 On some great road, or resting in an inn,
 Or at a ford, or sleeping by a tree*

So Balder said, —but Oder, well I know,
 My truant Oder I shall see no more
 To the world's end ; and Balder now is gone,
 And I am left un comforted in Heaven "

120

She spake , and all the Goddesses bewail'd
 Last from among the Heroes one came near,
 No God, but of the hero-troop the chief—
 Regner, who swept the northern sea with fleets,
 And ruled o'er Denmark and the heathy isles,
 Living , but Ella captured him and slew ,—
 A king whose fame then fill'd the vast of Heaven,
 Now time obscures it, and men's later deeds
 He last approach'd the corpse, and spake, and said --

130

" Balder, there yet are many Scalds in Heaven
 Still left, and that chief Scald, thy brother Biage,
 Whom we may bid to sing, though thou art gone
 And all these gladly, while we drink, we hear,
 After the feast is done, in Odín's hall ,
 But they harp ever on one string, and wake
 Remembrance in our soul of wars alone,
 Such as on earth we valiantly have waged,
 And blood, and ruing blows, and violent death
 But when thou saugest, Balder, thou didst strike
 Another note, and, like a bird in spring,
 Thy voice of joyance minded us, and youth,
 And wife, and children, and our ancient home
 Yes, and I, too, remember'd then no more
 My dungeon, where the serpents stung me dead,
 Nor Ella's victory on the English coast—
 But I heard Thora laugh in Gothland Isle,
 And saw my shepherdess, Aslauga, tend

140

He! flock along the white Norwegian beach 150
 Tears started to mine eyes with yearning joy
 Therefore with grateful heart I mourn thee dead."

So Regner spake, and all the Heroes groan'd
 But now the sun had pass'd the height of Heaven,
 And soon had all that day been spent in wail,
 But then the Father of the ages said —

"Ye Gods, there well may be too much of wail!
 Bring now the gather'd wood to Balder's ship,
 Heap on the deck the logs, and build the pyre"

But when the Gods and Heroes heard, they brought 160
 The wood to Balder's ship, and built a pile,
 Full the deck's breadth, and lofty, then the corpse
 Of Balder on the highest top they laid,
 With Nanna on his right, and on his left
 Hoder, his brother, whom his own hand slew
 And they set jars of wine and oil to lean
 Against the bodies, and stuck torches near,
 Splinters of pine-wood, soak'd with turpentine,
 And brought his arms and gold, and all his stuff,
 And slew the dogs who at his table fed, 170
 And his horse, Balder's horse, whom most he loved,
 And placed them on the pyre, and Odin threw
 A last choice gift thereon, his golden ring
 The mast they fixt, and hoisted up the sails,
 Then they put fire to the wood, and Thor
 Set his stout shoulder hard against the stern
 To push the ship through the thick sand,—sparks flew
 From the deep trench she plough'd, so strong a God
 Furrow'd it; and the water gurgled in
 And the ship floated on the waves, and rock'd 180
 But in the hills a strong east-wind arose,
 And came down moaning to the sea, first squalls
 Ran black o'er the sea's face, then steady rush'd
 The breeze, and fill'd the sails, and blew the fire
 And wreathed in smoke the ship stood out to sea

Soon with a roaring rose the mighty fire,
 And the pile crackled, and between the logs
 Sharp quivering tongues of flame shot out, and leapt,
 Curling and darting, higher, until they lick'd
 The summit of the pile, the dead, the mast, 190
 And ate the shrivelling sails, but still the ship
 Drove on, ablaze above her hull with fire
 And the Gods stood upon the beach, and gazed
 And while they gazed, the sun went lurid down
 Into the smoke-wrapt sea, and night came on
 Then the wind fell, with night, and there was calm,
 But through the dark they watch'd the burning ship
 Still carried o'er the distant waters on,
 Farther and farther, like an eye of fire
 And long, in the far dark, blazed Balder's pile, 200
 But fainter, as the stars rose high, it flamed,
 The bodies were consumed, ash choked the pile
 And as, in a decaying winter-fire,
 A charr'd log, falling, makes a shower of sparks---
 So with a shower of sparks the pile fell in,
 Reddening the sea around; and all was dark
 But the Gods went by starlight up the shore
 To Asgard, and sate down in Odin's hall
 At table, and the funeral-feast began
 All night they ate the boar Serimner's flesh, 210
 And from their horns, with silver rimm'd, drank mead,
 Silent, and waited for the sacred morn
 And morning over all the world was spread
 Then from their loathed feasts the Gods arose,
 And took their horses, and set forth to ride
 O'er the bridge Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
 To the ash Igdasil, and Ida's plain,
 Thor came on foot, the rest on horseback rode.
 And they found Mimir sitting by his fount
 Of wisdom, which beneath the ashtree springs, 220
 And saw the Nornies watering the roots

Of that world-shadowing tree with honey-dew
 There came the Gods, and sate them down on stones,
 And thus the Father of the ages said —

“Ye Gods, the terms ye know, which Hermod brought
 Accept them or reject them ! both have grounds.
 Accept them, and they bind us, unfulfil’d,
 To leave for ever Balder in the grave,
 An unrecover’d prisoner, shade with shades
 But how, ye say, should the fulfilment fail ?— 230
 Smooth sound the terms, and light to be fulfill’d,
 For dear-beloved was Balder while he lived
 In Heaven and earth, and who would grudge him tears ?
 But from the traitorous seed of Lok they come,
 These terms, and I suspect some hidden fraud
 Bethink ye, Gods, is there no other way ?—
 Speak, were not this a way, the way for Gods ?
 If I, if Odin, clad in radiant arms,
 Mounted on Sleipner, with the warrior Thor
 Drawn in his car beside me, and my sons, 240
 All the strong brood of Heaven, to swell my train,
 Should make irruption into Hela’s realm,
 And set the fields of gloom ablaze with light,
 And bring in triumph Balder back to Heaven ?”

He spake, and his fierce sons applauded loud
 But Frea, mother of the Gods, arose,
 Daughter and wife of Odin, thus she said —

“Odin, thou whirlwind, what a threat is this !
 Thou threatenest what transcends thy might, even thine
 For of all powers the mightiest far art thou, 250
 Lord over men on earth, and Gods in Heaven,
 Yet even from thee thyself hath been withheld
 One thing—to undo what thou thyself hast ruled
 For all which hath been fixt, was fixt by thee
 In the beginning, ere the Gods were born,
 Before the Heavens were builded, thou didst slay
 The giant Ymir, whom the abyss brought forth,

Thou and thy brethien fierce, the sons of Bor
 And cast his trunk to choke the abysmal void
 But of his flesh and members thou didst build 260
 The earth and Ocean, and above them Heaven
 And from the flaming world, where Muspel reigns,
 Thou sent'st and fetched st fire, and madest lights,
 Sun, moon, and stars, which thou hast hung in Heaven,
 Dividing clear the paths of night and day
 And Asgard thou didst build, and Midgard fort ,
 Then me thou mad'st , of us the Gods were born
 Last, walking by the sea, thou foundest spars
 Of wood, and framed'st men, who till the earth,
 Or on the sea, the field of pirates, sail 270
 And all the race of Ymn thou didst drown,
 Save one, Bergelmer ,—he on shipboard fled
 Thy deluge, and from him the giants sprang
 But all that brood thou hast removed far off,
 And set by Ocean's utmost marge to dwell ,
 But Hela into Nifheim thou threw'st,
 And gav'st her nine unlighted worlds to rule,
 A queen, and empire over all the dead
 That empire wilt thou now invade, light up
 Her darkness, from her grasp a subject tear ?— 280
 Try it , but I, for one, will not applaud.
 Nor do I ment, Odin, thou should'st slight
 Me and my words, though thou be first in Heaven ,
 For I too am a Goddess, born of thee,
 Thine eldest, and of me the Gods are sprung ,
 And all that is to come I know, but lock
 In mine own breast, and have to none reveal'd
 Come then ! since Hela holds by right her prey,
 But offers terms for his release to Heaven,
 Accept the chance , thou canst no more obtain 290
 Send through the world thy messengers , entreat
 All living and unliving things to weep
 For Balder , if thou haply thus may'st melt

Hela, and win the loved one back to Heaven

She spake, and on her face let fall her veil,
And bow'd her head, and sate with folded hands
Nor did the all-ruling Odin slight her word,
Straightway he spake, and thus address'd the Gods

“Go quickly forth through all the world, and pray
All living and unliving things to weep 300
Balder, if haply he may thus be won”

When the Gods heard, they straight arose, and took
Their horses, and rode forth through all the world,
North, south, east, west, they struck, and roam'd the world,
Entreating all things to weep Balder's death
And all that lived, and all without life, wept.
And as in winter, when the frost breaks up,
At winter's end, before the spring begins,
And a warm west-wind blows, and thaw sets in—
After an hour a dripping sound is heard 310
In all the forests and the soft-strewn snow,
Under the trees is dibbled thick with holes,
And from the boughs the snowloads shuffle down,
And, in fields sloping to the south, dark plots
Of grass peep out amid surrounding snow,
And widen, and the peasant's heart is glad—
So through the world was heard a dripping noise
Of all things weeping to bring Balder back,
And there fell joy upon the Gods to hear

But Hermod rode with Niord, whom he took 320
To show him spits and beaches of the sea
Far off, where some unwar'd might fail to weep—
Niord, the God of storms, whom fishes know,
Not born in Heaven, he was in Vanheim rear'd,
With men, but lives a hostage with the Gods,
He knows each frith, and every rocky creek
Fringed with dark pines, and sands where sea-fowl scream—
They two scour'd every coast, and all things wept.
And they rode home together, through the wood

Of Jarnvid, which to east of Midgard lies 330
 Bordering the giants, where the trees are iron,
 There in the wood before a cave they came,
 Where sate, in the cave's mouth, a skinny hag,
 Toothless and old, she gibes the passers by
 Thok is she call'd, but now Lok wore her shape,
 She greeted them the first, and laugh'd, and said —

“Ye Gods, good lack, is it so dull in Heaven,
 That ye come pleasuring to Thok's iron wood?
 Loves of change ye are, fastidious sprites
 Look, as in some boor's yard a sweet-breath'd cow, 340
 Whose manger is stuff'd full of good fresh hay,
 Snuffs at it daintily, and stoops her head
 To chew the straw, her litter, at her feet—
 So ye grow squeamish, Gods, and sniff at Heaven!”

She spake, but Hermod answer'd her and said —
 “Thok, not for gibes we come, we come for tears
 Balder is dead, and Hela holds her prey,
 But will restore, if all things give him tears
 Begrudge not thine! to all was Balder dear.”

Then, with a louder laugh, the hag replied — 350
 “Is Balder dead? and do ye come for tears?
 Thok with dry eyes will weep o'er Balder's pyre
 Weep him all other things, if weep they will—
 I weep him not! let Hela keep her prey.”

She spake, and to the cavern's depth she fled,
 Mocking, and Hermod knew their toil was vain.
 And as seafaring men, who long have wrought
 In the great deep for gain, at last come home,
 And towards evening see the headlands rise 360
 Of their dear country, and can plainly descry
 A fire of wither'd furze which boys have lit
 Upon the cliffs, or smoke of burning weeds
 Out of a till'd field inland, —then the wind
 Catches them, and drives out again to sea;
 And they go long days tossing up and down

Over the grey sea-ridges, and the glimpse
Of port they had makes bitterer far their toil—
So the Gods' cross was bitterer for then joy

Then, sad at heart, to Niord Hermod spake —
"It is the aceuser Lok, who flouts us all ! 370
Ride back, and tell in Heaven this heavy news ,
I must again below, to Hela's realm "

He spoke , and Niord set forth back to Heaven
But northward Hermod rode, the way below,
The way he knew , and traversed Giall's stream,
And down to Ocean groped, and cross'd the ice,
And came beneath the wall, and found the grate
Still lifted , well was his return foreknown
And once more Hermod saw around him spread
The joyless plains, and heard the streams of Hell 380
But as he enter'd, on the extremest bound
Of Niflheim, he saw one ghost come near,
Hovering, and stopping oft, as if afraid—
Hoder, the unhappy, whom his own hand slew
And Hermod look'd, and knew his brother's ghost,
And call'd him by his name, and sternly said —

"Hoder, ill-fated, blind in heart and eyes !
Why tarest thou to plunge thee in the gulph
Of the deep inner gloom, but fittest here,
In twilight, on the lonely verge of Hell, 390
Far from the other ghosts, and Hela's throne?
Doubtless thou fearest to meet Balder's voice,
Thy brother, whom through folly thou didst slay "

He spoke , but Hoder answer'd him, and said .—
"Hermod the nimble, dost thou still pursue
The unhappy with reproach, even in the grave ?
For this I died, and fled beneath the gloom,
Not daily to endure abhorring Gods,
Nor with a hateful presence cumber Heaven ;
And canst thou not, even here, pass pitying by ? 400
No less than Balder have I lost the light

Of Heaven, and communion with my kin ,
 I too had once a wife, and once a child,
 And substance, and a golden house in Heaven—
 But all I left of my own act, and fled
 Below, and dost thou hate me even here ?
 Balder upbraids me not, nor hates at all,
 Though he has cause, have any cause , but he,
 When that with downcast looks I hither came,
 Stretch'd forth his hand, and with benignant voice, 410
Welcome, he said, if there be welcome here,
Brother and fellow-sport of Lok with me !

And not to offend thee, Hermod, nor to force
 My hated converse on thee, came I up
 From the deep gloom, where I will now return ,
 But earnestly I long'd to hover near,
 Not too far off, when that thou camest by ,
 To feel the presence of a brother God,
 And hear the passage of a horse of Heaven,
 For the last time—for here thou com'st no more " 420

He spake, and turn'd to go to the inner gloom
 But Hermod stay'd him with mild words, and said :—

"Thou doest well to chide me, Hoder blind !
 Truly thou say'st, the planning guilty mind
 Was Lok's , the unwitting hand alone was thine.
 But Gods are like the sons of men in this—
 When they have woe, they blame the nearest cause
 Howbeit stay, and be appeased ! and tell
 Sits Balder still in pomp by Hela's side,
 Or is he mingled with the unnumber'd dead ?" 430

And the blind Hoder answer'd him and spake —
 " His place of state remains by Hela's side,
 But empty , for his wife, for Nanna came
 Lately below, and join'd him and the pair
 Frequent the still recesses of the realm
 Of Hela, and hold converse undisturb'd.
 But they too, doubtless, will have breathed the balm,

Which floats before a visitant from Heaven,
And have drawn upward to this verge of Hell "

He spake ; and, as he ceased, a puff of wind 440
Roll'd heavily the leaden mist aside

Round where they stood, and they beheld two forms
Make toward them o'er the stretching cloudy plain
And Hermod straight perceived them, who they were,
Balder and Nanna , and to Balder said —

" Balder, too truly thou foresaw'st a snare !
Lok triumphs still, and Hela keeps her prey
No more to Asgard shalt thou come, nor lodge
In thy own house, Breidablik, nor enjoy 450
The love all bear toward thee, nor train up
Forset, thy son, to be beloved like thee.
Here must thou lie, and wait an endless age.
Therefore for the last time, O Balder, hail ! "

He spake , and Balder answer'd him, and said —
" Hail and farewell ! for here thou com'st no more
Yet mourn not for me, Hermod, when thou sitt'st
In Heaven, nor let the other Gods lament,
As wholly to be pitied, quite forlorn
For Nanna hath rejoyn'd me, who, of old,
In Heaven, was seldom parted from my side , 460
And still the acceptance follows me, which crown'd
My former life, and cheers me even here
The iron frown of Hela is relax'd
When I draw nigh, and the wan tribes of dead
Love me, and gladly bring for my award
Their ineffectual feuds and feeble hates—
Shadows of hates, but they distress them still "

And the fleet-footed Hermod made reply —
" Thou hast then all the solace death allows,
Esteem and function , and so far is well 470
Yet here thou liest, Balder, underground,
Rusting for ever , and the years roll on,
The generations pass, the ages grow,

And bring us nearer to the final day
 When from the south shall march the fiery band
 And cross the bridge of Heaven, with Lok for guide,
 And Fenris at his heel with broken chain ;
 While from the east the giant Rymer steers
 His ship, and the great serpent makes to land
 And all are marshall'd in one flaming square 480
 Against the Gods, upon the plains of Heaven,
 I mourn thee, that thou canst not help us then "

He spake ; but Balder answer'd him, and said —
 " Mourn not for me ! Mourn, Hermod, for the Gods ,
 Mourn for the men on earth, the Gods in Heaven,
 Who live, and with their eyes shall see that day !
 The day will come, when fall shall Asgard's towers,
 And Odin, and his sons, the seed of Heaven ,
 But what were I, to save them in that hour ?
 If strength might save them, could not Odinn save, 490
 My father, and his pride, the warrior Thor,
 Vidar the silent, the impetuous Tyr ?

I, what were I, when these can nought avail ?
 Yet, doubtless, when the day of battle comes,
 And the two hosts are marshal'd, and in Heaven
 The golden-crested cock shall sound alarm,
 And his black brother-bird from hence reply,
 And buckles clash and spears begin to pour—
 Longing will stir within my breast, though vain
 But not to me so grievous, as, I know, 500
 To other Gods it were, is my enforced
 Absence from fields where I could nothing aid ,
 For I am long since weary of your storm
 Of carnage, and find, Hermod, in your life
 Something too much of war and broils, which make
 Life one perpetual fight, a bath of blood
 Mine eyes are dizzy with the arrowy hail ,
 Mine ears are stunn'd with blows, and sick for calm.
 Inactive therefore let me lie, in gloom,

Unarm'd, inglorious, I attend the course 510
 Of ages, and my late return to light,
 In times less alien to a spirit mild,
 In new-recover'd seats, the happier day "

He spake, and the fleet Hermod thus replied —
 " Brother, what seats are these, what happier day ?
 Tell me, that I may ponder it when gone "

And the ray-crowned Balder answer'd him .—
 " Far to the south, beyond the blue, there spreads
 Another Heaven, the boundless —no one yet
 Hath reach'd it, there hereafter shall arise 520
 The second Asgard, with another name
 Thither, when o'er this present earth and Heavens
 The tempest of the latter days hath swept,
 And they from sight have disappear'd, and sunk,
 Shall a small remnant of the Gods repair,
 Hoder and I shall join them from the grave
 There re-assembling we shall see emerge
 From the bright Ocean at our feet an earth
 More fresh, more verdant than the last, with fruits
 Self-springing, and a seed of man preserved, 530
 Who then shall live in peace, as now in war
 But we in Heaven shall find again with joy
 The ruin'd palaces of Odin, seats
 Familiar, halls where we have sup'p'd of old,
 Re-enter them with wonder, never fill
 Our eyes with gazing, and rebuild with tears
 And we shall tread once more the well-known plain
 Of Ida, and among the grass shall find
 The golden dice wherewith we play'd of yore ;
 And that will bring to mind the former life 540
 And pastime of the Gods, the wise discourse
 Of Odin, the delights of other days,
 O Hermod, pray that thou may'st join us then !
 Such for the future is my hope, meanwhile,
 I rest the thrall of Hela, and endure

Death, and the gloom which round me even now
Thickens, and to its inner gulph recalls
Farewell, for longer speech is not allow'd '—

He spoke, and waved farewell, and gave his hand
To Nanna, and she gave their brother blind 550
Her hand, in turn, for guidance ; and the three
Departed o'er the cloudy plain, and soon
Faded from sight into the interior gloom
But Hermod stood beside his drooping horse,
Mute, gazing after them in tears, and fain,
Fain had he follow'd then receding steps,
Though they to death were bound, and he to Heaven,
Then, but a power he could not break withheld
And as a stork which idle boys have trapp'd,
And tied him in a yard, at autumn sees 560
Flocks of his kind pass flying o'er his head
To warmer lands, and coasts that keep the sun ;—
He strains to join their flight, and from his shed
Follows them with a long complaining cry—
So Hermod gazed, and yearn'd to join his kin

At last he sigh'd, and set forth back to Heaven

SAINT BRANDAN

SAINT BRANDAN sails the northern main ;
The brotherhoods of saints are glad
He greets them once, he sails again,
So late !—such storms !—The Saint is mad !

He heard, across the howling seas,
Chime convent-bells on wintry nights,
He saw, on spray-swept Hebrides,
Twinkle the monastery-lights

But north, still north, Saint Brandan steer'd—
And now no bells, no convents more ! 10
The hurtling Polar lights are near'd,
The sea without a human shore

At last—(it was the Christmas night,
Stars shone after a day of storm)—
He sees float past an iceberg white,
And on it—Christ !—a living form

That furtive men, that scowling eye,
Of hair that red and tufted fell—
It is—Oh, where shall Brandan fly ?—
The traitor Judas, out of hell ! 20

Palsied with terror, Brandan sate,
The moon was bright, the iceberg near
He hears a voice sigh humbly. "Wait !
By lugh permission I am here

"One moment wait, thou holy man !
On earth my crime, my death, they knew,
My name is under all men's ban—
Ah, tell them of my respite too !

"Tell them, one blessed Christmas-night—
(It was the first after I came, 30
Breathing self-murder, frenzy, spite,
To rue my guilt in endless flame)—

"I felt, as I in torment lay
'Mid the souls plagued by heavenly power,
An angel touch mine arm, and say
Go hence and cool thyself an hour !

"Ah, whence this mercy, Lord ?" I said
*The Leper recollect, said he,
Who ask'd the passers-by for aid,
In Joppa, and thy charity* 40

"Then I remember'd how I went,
In Joppa, through the public street,
One morn when the sirocco spent
Its storms of dust with burning heat ,

"And in the street a leper sate,
Shivering with fever, naked, cold ,
Saw naked his sores from heel to pate,
The hot wind fever'd him five-fold

"He gazed upon me as I pass'd,
And murmur'd *Help me, or I die !*— 50
To the poor wretch my cloak I cast,
Saw him look eased, and hurried by

"Oh, Brandan, think what grace divine,
What blessing must full goodness shower,
When fragment of it small, like mine,
Hath such inestimable power !

"Well-fed, well-clothed, well-friended, I
Did that chance act of good, that one !
Then went my way to kill and lie—
Forget my good as soon as done 60

"That germ of kindness, in the womb
Of mercy caught, did not expire ,
Outhlives my guilt, outhlives my doom,
And friends me in the pit of fire

"Once every year, when carols wake,
On earth, the Christmas-night's repose,
Arising from the sinner's lake,
I journey to those healing snows

"I stanch with ice my burning breast,
With silence balm my whirling brain 70
O Brandan ! to this hour of rest
That Joppa leper's ease was pain "——

Tears started to Saint Brandan's eyes ,
 He bow'd his head, he breathed a prayer—
 Then look'd, and lo, the frosty skies !
 The iceberg, and no Judas there !

THE NECKAN

IN summer, on the headlands,
 The Baltic Sea along,
 Sits Neckan with his harp of gold,
 And sings his plaintive song

Green rolls beneath the headlands,
 Green rolls the Baltic Sea ,
 And there, below the Neckan's feet,
 His wife and children be

He sings not of the ocean,
 Its shells and roses pale ,
 Of earth, of earth the Neckan sings,
 He hath no other tale

10

He sits upon the headlands,
 And sings a mournful stave
 Of all he saw and felt on earth
 Far from the kind sea-wave

Sings how, a knight, he wander'd
 By castle, field, and town—
 But earthly knights have harder hearts
 Than the sea-children own

20

Sings of his earthly bridal—
 Priest, knights, and ladies gay.
 “—And who art thou,” the priest began,
 “Sir Knight, who wedd'st to-day ?”—

"—I am no knight," he answered,
 "From the sea-waves I come"—
 The knights drew sword, the ladies scream'd,
 The supliced priest stood dumb

He sings how from the chapel
 He vanish'd with his bride, 30
 And bore her down to the sea-halls,
 Beneath the salt sea-tide

He sings how she sits weeping
 'Mid shells that round her lie
 "—False Neckan shares my bed," she weeps,
 "No Christian mate have I"—

He sings how through the billows
 He rose to earth again,
 And sought a priest to sign the cross,
 That Neckan Heaven might gain 40

He sings how, on an evening,
 Beneath the birch-trees cool,
 He sate and play'd his harp of gold,
 Beside the river-pool

Beside the pool sate Neckan—
 Tears fill'd his mild blue eye
 On his white mule, across the bridge,
 A cassock'd priest rode by

"Why sitt'st thou there, O Neckan,
 And play'st thy harp of gold? 50
 Sooner shall this my staff bear leaves,
 Than thou shalt Heaven behold"—

But, lo, the staff, it budded !
 It green'd, it branch'd, it waved
 "—O ruth of God," the priest cried out,
 "This lost sea-creature saved !"

The cassock'd priest rode onwards,
 And vanished with his mule ,
 But Neckan in the twilight grey
 Wept by the river-pool

60

He wept · "The earth hath kindness,
 The sea, the starry poles ,
 Earth, sea, and sky, and God above—
 But, ah, not human souls !"

In summer, on the headlands,
 The Baltic Sea along,
 Sits Neckan with his harp of gold,
 And sings this plaintive song

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN.

Come, dear children, let us away ,
 Down and away below !
 Now my brothers call from the bay,
 Now the great winds shoreward blow,
 Now the salt tides seaward flow ,
 Now the wild white horses play,
 Champ and chafe and toss in the spray
 -Children dear, let us away !
 This way, this way !

Call her once before you go—
 Call once yet !

10

In a voice that she will know :
 "Margaret ! Margaret !"
 Children's voices should be dear
 (Call once more) to a mother's ear ,
 Children's voices, wild with pain—
 Surely she will come again !

Call her once and come away ,
 This way, this way !
 " Mother dear, we cannot stay !
 The wild white horses foam and fret "
 Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away down ;
 Call no more !
 One last look at the white-wall'd town,
 And the little grey church on the windy shore ,
 Then come down !
 She will not come though you call all day ,
 Come away, come away !

Children dear, was it yesterday 30
 We heard the sweet bells over the bay ?
 In the caverns where we lay,
 Through the surf and through the swell,
 The far off sound of a silver bell ?
 Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
 Where the winds are all asleep ,
 Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
 Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
 Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
 Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground , 40
 Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
 Dry then mail and bask in the brine ;
 Where great whales come sailing by,
 Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
 Round the world for ever and aye ?
 When did music come this way ?
 Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, was it yesterday
 (Call yet once) that she went away ?
 Once she sate with you and me, 50
 On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,

And the youngest sate on her knee
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea,
She said "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me !
And I lose my poor soul, Merman ! here with thee"
I said "Go up, dear heart, through the waves , 60
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves !"
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, were we long alone ?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan ,
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say ,
Come !" I said , and we rose through the surf in the bay
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town ,
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still, 70
To the little grey church on the windy hill
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes
She sate by the pillar , we saw her clear
"Margaret, hush ! come quick, we are here !
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone ,
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan "
But ah, she gave me never a look, 80
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book !
Loud prays the priest , shut stands the door
Come away, children, call no more !
Come away, come down, call no more !

Down, down, down !
Down to the depths of the sea !

She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully
Hark what she sings "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy ! 90
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well ;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun !"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea ;
And her eyes are set in a stare , 100
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh ,
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair

Come away, away children ;
Come children, come down !
The hoarse wind blows coldly , 110
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door ,
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl
Singing "Here came a mortal, 120
But faithless was she !

And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea ”

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low ,
When sweet air come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly 130
On the blanch'd sands a gloom ;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town ,
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down
Singing . “ There dwells a loved one, 140
But cruel is she !
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea ”

SONNETS

AUSTERITY OF POETRY

THAT son of Italy who tried to blow,
Ere Dante came, the trump of sacred song,
In his light youth amid a festal throng
Sate with his bride to see a public show

Fair was the bride, and on her front did glow
Youth like a star, and what to youth belong—
Gay raiment, sparkling gauds, elation strong
A prop gave way ! crash fell a platform ! lo,

'Mid struggling sufferers, hurt to death, she lay !
Shuddering, they drew her garments off—and found 10
A robe of sackcloth next the smooth, white skin

Such, poets, is your bride, the Muse ! young, gay,
Radiant, adorn'd outside ; a hidden ground
Of thought and of austerity within

A PICTURE AT NEWSTEAD

WHAT made my heart, at Newstead, fullest swell ?—
'Twas not the thought of Byron, of his cry
Stormily sweet, his Titan-agony ;
It was the sight of that Lord Arundel

Who struck, in heat, his child he loved so well,
 And his child's reason flicker'd, and did die.
 Painted (he wail'd it) in the gallery
 They hang, the picture doth the story tell

Behold the stern, mail'd father, staff in hand !
 The little fair-hair'd son, with vacant gaze, 10
 Where no more lights of sense or knowledge are !

Methinks the woe, which made that father stand
 Baring his dumb remorse to future days,
 Was woe than Byron's woe more tragic far

WORLDLY PLACE

EVEN in a palace, life may be led well !
 So spake the imperial sage, purest of men,
 Marcus Aurelius But the stifling den
 Of common life, where, crowded up pell-mell,

Our freedom for a little bread we sell,
 And drudge under some foolish master's ken
 Who rates us if we peer outside our pen—
 Match'd with a palace, is not this a hell ?

Even in a palace ! On his truth sincere,
 Who spoke these words, no shadow ever came, 10
 And when my ill-school'd spirit is aflame

Some nobler, ampler stage of life to win,
 I'll stop, and say "There were no succour here !"
 The aids to noble life are all within."

THE BETTER PART.

LONG fed on boundless hopes, O race of man,
 How angrily thou spurn'st all simpler fare !

Her head 'mid ignominy, death, and tombs,
She her Good Shepherd's hasty image drew—
And on his shoulders, not a lamb, a kid.

MONICA'S LAST PRAYER

" AH, could thy grave at home, at Carthage, be ! "
Care not for that, and lay me where I fall !
Everywhere heard will be the judgment-call ;
But at God's altar, oh ! remember me

Thus Monica, and died in Italy
Yet fervent had her longing been, through all
Her course, for home at last, and burial
With her own husband, by the Libyan sea

Had been ! but at the end, to her pure soul
All tie with all beside seem'd vain and cheap, 10
And union before God the only care

Creeds pass, rites change, no altar standeth whole
Yet we her memory, as she pray'd, will keep,
Keep by this *Life in God, and union there !*

LYRIC POEMS

THE STRAYED REVELLER (*Part*)

The South

The Gods are happy
They turn on all sides
Their shining eyes,
And see below them
The earth and men

They see Theseias
Sitting, staff in hand,
On the warm, grassy
Asopus bank,
His robe drawn over
His old, sightless head,
Revolving only
The doom of Thebes

10

They see the Centaurs
In the upper glens
Of Pelion, in the streams,
Where red-berried ashes fringe
The clear-brown shallow pools,
With streaming flanks, and heads
Rear'd proudly, snuffing
The mountain wind

20

They see the Indian
Drifting, knife in hand,
His frail boat moor'd to
A floating isle thick-matted
With large-leaved, low-creeping melon-plants,
And the dark cucumber
He reaps, and stows them,
Drifting—drifting,—round him,
Round his green harvest-plot, 30
Flow the cool lake-waves,
The mountains ring them

They see the Scythian
On the wide stepp, unharnessing
His wheel'd house at noon
He tethers his beast down, and makes his meal—
Mares' milk, and bread
Baked on the embers,—all around
The boundless, waving grass-plains, stretch, thick-stair'd
With saffron and the yellow hollyhock 40
And flag-leaved iris flowers
Sitting in his cart
He makes his meal, before him, for long miles,
Alive with bright green hzards,
And the springing bustard-fowl,
The track, a straight black line,
Furrows the rich soil, here and there
Clusters of lonely mounds
Topp'd with rough-hewn,
Grey, rain-blear'd statues, overpeer 50
The sunny waste

They see the ferry,
On the broad, clay-laden
Lone Chorasman stream,—thereon,
With snort and strain,

Two horses, strongly swimming, tow
The ferry-boat, with woven ropes
To either bow
Firm harness'd by the mane, a chief,
With shout and shaken spear, 60
Stands at the prow, and guides them, but astern
The cowering merchants, in long robes,
Sit pale beside their wealth
Of silk-bales and of balsam-drops,
Of gold and ivory,
Of turquoise-earth and amethyst,
Jasper and chalcedony,
And milk-bair'd onyx-stones
The loaded boat swings groaning
In the yellow eddies; 70
The Gods behold them

They see the Heroes
Sitting in the dark ship
On the foamless, long-heaving
Violet sea,
At sunset nearing
The Happy Islands

These things, Ulysses,
The wise bards also
Behold and sing 80
But oh, what labour!
O prince, what pain!

They too can see
Tiresias,—but the Gods,
Who give them vision,
Added this law
That they should bear too
His groping blindness,
His dark foreboding,

His scorn'd white hairs , 90
Bear Hera's anger
Through a life lengthen'd
To seven ages

They see the Centaurs
On Pelion,—then they feel,
They too, the maddening wine
Swell their large veins to bursting , in wild pain
They feel the biting spears
Of the grim Lapithæ, and Theseus, drive,
Drive crashing through their bones , they feel 100
High on a jutting rock in the red stream
Alcmena's dreadful son
Ply his bow ;—such a price
The Gods exact for song
To become what we sing

They see the Indian
On his mountain lake ; but squalls
Make their skiff reel, and worms
In the unkind spring have gnawn
Their melon-harvest to the heart —They see 110
The Scythian ; but long frosts
Parch them in winter-time on the bare stepp,
Till they too fade like grass , they crawl
Like shadows forth in spring

They see the merchants
On the Oxus stream ,—but care
Must visit first them too, and make them pale
Whether, through whirling sand,
A cloud of desert robber-horse have burst
Upon their caravan ; or greedy kings, 120
In the wall'd cities the way passes through,
Crush'd them with tolls , or fever-airs,

On some great river's marge,
Mown them down, far from home.

They see the Heroes
Near harbour,—but they share
Their lives, and former violent toil in Thebes,
Seven-gated Thebes, or Troy .
Or where the echoing oars
Of Argo first
Startled the unknown sea 130

The old Silenus
Came, lolling in the sunshine,
From the dewy forest-coverts,
This way, at noon
Sitting by me, while his Fauns
Down at the water-side
Sprinkled and smoothed
His drooping garland,
He told me these things 140

SELF-DECEPTION

SAY, what blinds us, that we claim the glory
Of possessing powers not our share?
—Since man woke on earth, he knows his story,
But, before we woke on earth, we were

Long, long since, undower'd yet, our spirit
Roam'd, ere birth, the treasures of God ,
Saw the gifts, the powers it might inherit,
Ask'd an outfit for its earthly road

Then, as now, this tremulous, eager being
Strain'd and long'd and grasp'd each gift it saw , 10
Then, as now, a Power beyond our seeing
Staved us back, and gave our choice the law

Ah, whose hand that day through Heaven guided
 Man's new spirit, since it was not we ?
 Ah, who sway'd our choice, and who decided
 What our gifts, and what our wants should be ?

For, alas ! he left us each retaining
 Shreds of gifts which he refused in full.
 Still these waste us with their hopeless straining,
 Still the attempt to use them proves them null 20

And on earth we wander, groping, reeling,
 Powers stir in us, stir and disappear.
 Ah ! and he, who placed our master-feeling,
 Fail'd to place that master-feeling clear

We but dream we have our wish'd-for powers,
 Ends we seek we never shall attain
 Ah ! *some* power exists there, which is ours ?
Some end is there, we indeed may gain ?

DOVER BEACH

THE sea is calm to-night
 The tide is full, the moon lies fair
 Upon the straits,—on the French coast the light
 Gleams and is gone, the cliffs of England stand,
 Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay
 Come to the window, sweet is the night-air !
 Only, from the long line of spray
 Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
 Listen ! you hear the grating roar
 Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling, 10
 At their return, up the high strand,
 Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
 With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
 The eternal note of sadness in

Sophocles long ago
 Heard it on the Ægæan, and it brought
 Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
 Of human misery, we
 Find also in the sound a thought,
 Hearing it by this distant northern sea 20

The Sea of Faith
 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled
 But now I only hear
 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
 Retreating, to the breath
 Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
 And naked shingles of the world

Ah, love, let us be true
 To one another ' for the world, which seems 30
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,
 So various, so beautiful, so new,
 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain ;
 And we are here as on a darkling plain
 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
 Where ignorant armies clash by night

THE LORD'S MESSENGERS.

THUS saith the Lord to his own .—
 "See ye the trouble below ?
 Warfare of man from his birth '
 Too long let we them groan ,
 Haste, arise ye, and go,
 Carry my peace upon earth ' "

Gladly they rise at his call,
 Gladly obey his command,
 Gladly descend to the plain
 —Ah ! How few of them all, 10
 Those willing servants, shall stand
 In the Master's presence again !

Some in the tumult are lost ,
 Baffled, bewilder'd, they stray
 Some, as prisoners, draw breath
 Some, unconquer'd, are cross'd
 (Not yet half through the day)
 By a pitiless arrow of Death

Hardly, hardly shall one
 Come, with countenance bright, 20
 At the close of day, from the plain ,
 His Master's errand well done,
 Safe through the smoke of the fight,
 Back to his Master again

THE YOUTH OF NATURE

RAISED are the dripping oars,
 Silent the boat ! the lake
 Lovely and soft as a dream,
 Swims in the sheen of the moon
 The mountains stand at its head
 Clear in the pure June-night,
 But the valleys are flooded with haze.
 Rydal and Fairfield are there ,
 In the shadow Wordsworth lies dead
 So it is, so it will be for aye. 10
 Nature is fresh as of old,
 Is lovely , a mortal is dead

The spots which recall him survive,
 For he lent a new life to these hills
 The Pillar still broods o'er the fields
 Which border Ennerdale Lake,
 And Egremont sleeps by the sea
 The gleam of The Evening Star
 Twinkles on Grasmere no more,
 But hush'd and solemn and grey 20
 The sheepfold of Michael survives ;
 And, far to the south, the heath
 Still blows in the Quantock coombs,
 By the favourite waters of Ruth.
 These survive !—yet not without pain,
 Pain and dejection to night,
 Can I feel that their poet is gone

He grew old in an age he condemn'd.
 He look'd on the rushing decay
 Of the times which had shelter'd his youth 30
 Felt the dissolving throes
 Of a social order he loved ,
 Outlived his brethren, his peers ;
 And, like the Theban seer,
 Died in his enemies' day

Cold bubbled the spring of Tilphusa,
 Copais lay bright in the moon,
 Helicon glass'd in the lake
 Its firs, and afar rose the peaks
 Of Parnassus, snowily clear , 40
 Thebes was behind him in flames,
 And the clang of arms in his ear,
 When his awe-struck captors led
 The Theban seer to the spring
 Tiresias drank and died
 Nor did reviving Thebes
 See such a prophet again

Well may we mourn, when the head
 Of a sacred poet lies low
 In an age which can rear them no more ! 50
 The complaining millions of men
 Darken in labour and pain ,
 But he was a priest to us all
 Of the wonder and bloom of the world,
 Which we saw with his eyes, and were glad
 He is dead, and the fruit-bearing day
 Of his race is past on the earth ,
 And darkness returns to our eyes

For, oh ! is it you, is it you,
 Moonlight, and shadow, and lake, 60
 And mountains, that fill us with joy,
 Or the poet who sings you so well ?
 Is it you, O beauty, O grace,
 O charm, O romance, that we feel,
 Or the voice which reveals what you are ?
 Are ye, like daylight and sun,
 Shared and rejoiced in by all ?
 Or are ye immersed in the mass
 Of matter, and hard to extract,
 Or sunk at the core of the world 70
 Too deep for the most to discern ?
 Like stars in the deep of the sky,
 Which arise on the glass of the sage,
 But are lost when their watcher is gone

“ They are here ”—I heard, as men heard
 In Mysian Ida the voice
 Of the Mighty Mother, or Crete,
 The murmur of Nature reply—
 “ Loveliness, magic, and grace,
 They are here ! they are set in the world, 80

They abide , and the finest of souls
 Hath not been thrill'd by them all,
 Nor the dullest been dead to them quite
 The poet who sings them may die,
 But they are immortal and live,
 For they are the life of the world
 Will ye not learn it, and know,
 When ye mourn that a poet is dead,
 That the singer was less than his themes,
 Life, and emotion, and I ?

90

“ More than the singer are these.
 Weak is the tremor of pain
 That thrills in his mournfullest chord
 To that which once ran through his soul
 Cold the elation of joy
 In his gladdest, airiest song,
 To that which of old in his youth
 Fill'd him and made him divine
 Hardly his voice at its best
 Gives us a sense of the awe,
 The vastness, the grandeur, the gloom
 Of the unlit gulph of himself

100

“ Ye know not yourselves , and you bards—
 The clearest, the best, who have read
 Most in themselves—have beheld
 Less than they left unreveal'd
 Ye express not yourselves,—can you make
 With marble, with colour, with word,
 What charm'd you in others re-live ?
 Can thy pencil, O artist ! restore
 The figure, the bloom of thy love,
 As she was in her morning of spring ?
 Canst thou paint the ineffable smile
 Of her eyes as they rested on thine ?

110

Can the image of life have the glow,
The motion of life itself ?

“ Yourselves and your fellows ye know not , and me,
The mateless, the one, will ye know ?
Will ye scan me, and read me, and tell
Of the thoughts that ferment in my breast, 120
My longing, my sadness, my joy ?
Will ye claim for you great ones the gift
To have render'd the gleam of my skies,
To have echoed the moan of my seas,
Utter'd the voice of my hills ?
When your great ones depart, will ye say :
All things have suffer'd a loss,
Nature is hid in their grave ?

“ Race after race, man after man,
Have thought that my secret was theirs, 130
Have dream'd that I lived but for them,
That they were my glory and joy
—They are dust, they are changed, they are gone !
I remain ?

PALLADIUM

SET where the upper streams of Simois flow
Was the Palladium, high 'mid rock and wood ,
And Hector was in Ithum, far below,
And fought, and saw it not—but there it stood !

It stood, and sun and moonshine rain'd their light
On the pure columns of its glen-built hall
Backward and forward roll'd the waves of fight
Round Troy—but while this stood, Troy could not fall.

So, in its lovely moonlight, lives the soul
 Mountains surround it, and sweet virgin air , 10
 Cold plashing, past it, crystal waters roll ,
 We visit it by moments, ah, too rare !

We shall renew the battle in the plain
 To-morrow ,—red with blood will Xanthus be,
 Hector and Ajax will be there again,
 Helen will come upon the wall to see

Then we shall rust in shade, or shine in strife,
 And fluctuate twixt blind hopes and blind despairs,
 And fancy that we put forth all our life,
 And never know how with the soul it fares. 20

Still doth the soul, from its lone fastness high,
 Upon our life a ruling effluence send
 And when it fails, fight as we will, we die ;
 And while it lasts, we cannot wholly end.

REVOLUTIONS

BEFORE man parted for this earthly strand,
 While yet upon the verge of heaven he stood,
 God put a heap of letters in his hand,
 And bade him make with them what word he could.

And man has turn'd them many times ; made Greece,
 Rome, England, France ;—yes, nor in vain essay'd
 Way after way, changes that never cease !
 The letters have combined, something was made.

But ah ! an inextinguishable sense
 Haunts him that he has not made what he should ; 10
 That he has still, though old, to recommence,
 Since he has not yet found the word God would.

And empire after empire, at their height
Of sway, have felt this boding sense come on,
Have felt their huge frames not constructed right,
And droop'd, and slowly died upon their throne

One day, thou say'st, there will at last appear
The word, the order, which God meant should be
—Ah! we shall know *that* well when it comes near,
The band will quit man's heart, he will breathe free 20

SELF-DEPENDENCE

WEARY of myself, and sick of asking
What I am, and what I ought to be,
At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea

And a look of passionate desire
O'er the sea and to the stars I send.
“Ye who from my childhood up have calm'd me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!”

“Ah, once more,” I cried, “ye stars, ye waters,
On my heart your mighty charm renew, 10
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
Feel my soul becoming vast like you!”

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer
“Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

‘Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy 20

"And with joy the stars perform then shining,
And the sea its long moon-silver'd roll ,
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see "

O air-born voice ! long since, severely clear,
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear 30
"Resolve to be thyself ; and know that he,
Who finds himself, loses his misery !"

MORALITY

We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides ;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides
 But tasks in hours of insight will'd
 Can be through hours of gloom fulfil'd.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone ,
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done 10
 Not till the hours of light return,
 All we have built do we discern

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
Ask, how *she* view'd thy self-control,
Thy struggling, task'd morality—
 Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
 Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
 Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek, 20
 See, on her face a glow is spread,
 A strong emotion on her cheek !
 " Ah, child ! " she cries, " that strife divine,
 Whence was it, for it is not mine ?

" There is no effort on *my* brow—
 I do not strive, I do not weep ,
 I rush with the swift spheres and glow
 In joy, and when I will, I sleep
 Yet that severe, that earnest air,
 I saw, I felt it once—but where ? 30

" I knew not yet the gauge of time,
 Nor wore the manacles of space ,
 I felt it in some other clime,
 I saw it in some other place
 'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
 And lay upon the breast of God "

LINES

WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

In this lone, open glade I lie,
 Screen'd by deep boughs on either hand ,
 And at its end, to stay the eye,
 Those black-crown'd, red-boled pine-trees stand !

Birds here make song, each bird has his,
 Across the girdling city's hum
 How green under the boughs it is !
 How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come !

Sometimes a child will cross the glade
 To take his nurse his broken toy , 10

Sometimes a thrush flit overhead
Deep in her unknown day's employ

Here at my feet what wonders pass,
What endless, active life is here !
What blowing daisies, fragrant grass !
An air-stir'd forest, fresh and clear

Scarce fresher is the mountain-sod
Where the tired angler lies, stretch'd out,
And, eased of basket and of rod,
Counts his day's spoil, the spotted trout 20

In the huge world, which roars hard by,
Be others happy if they can !
But in my helpless cradle I
Was breathed on by the rural Pan

I, on men's impious uproar hush'd,
Think often, as I hear them rave,
That peace has left the upper world
And now keeps only in the grave

Yet here is peace for ever new !
When I who watch them am away, 30
Still all things in this glade go through
The changes of their quiet day.

Then to their happy rest they pass !
The flowers upclose, the birds are fed,
The night comes down upon the grass,
The child sleeps warmly in his bed

Calm soul of all things ! make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of thine,
Man did not make, and cannot mar 40

The will to neither strive nor cry,
 The power to feel with others give !
 Calm, calm me more ! nor let me die
 Before I have begun to live.

CADMUS AND HARMONIA

FAR, far from here,
 The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay
 Among the green Illyrian hills , and there
 The sunshine in the happy glens is fan,
 And by the sea, and in the biakes
 The grass is cool, the sea-side air
 Buoyant and fresh, the mountain flowers
 More virginal and sweet than ours

And there, they say, two bright and aged snakes,
 Who once were Cadmus and Harmonia, 10
 Bask in the glens or on the warm sea-shore,
 In breathless quiet, after all their ills ,
 Nor do they see their country, nor the place
 Where the Sphinx lived among the frowning hills,
 Nor the unhappy palace of their race,
 Nor Thebes, nor the Ismenus, any more

There those two live, far in the Illyrian biakes !
 They had stay'd long enough to see,
 In Thebes, the billow of calamity
 Over their own dear children roll'd, 20
 Curse upon curse, pang upon pang,
 For years, they sitting helpless in their home,
 A grey old man and woman ; yet of old
 The Gods had to their marriage come,
 And at the banquet all the Muses sang

Therefore they did not end their days
 In sight of blood , but were rapt, far away,
 To where the west-wind plays,
 And murmurs of the Adriatic come
 To those untrodden mountain-lawns , and there 30
 Placed safely in changed forms, the pair
 Wholly forget their first sad life, and home,
 And all that Theban woe, and stray
 For ever through the glens, placid and dumb.

APOLLO MUSAGETES

THROUGH the black, rushing smoke-bursts,
 Thick breaks the red flame ,
 All Etna heaves fiercely
 Her forest-clothed frame

Not here, O Apollo !
 Are haunts meet for thee
 But, where Helicon breaks down
 In cliff to the sea,

Where the moon-silver'd inlets
 Send far their light voice 10
 Up the still vale of Thisbe,
 O speed, and rejoice !

On the sward at the cliff-top
 Lie strewn the white flocks,
 On the cliff-side the pigeons
 Roost deep in the rocks

In the moonlight the shepherds,
 Soft lull'd by the rills,
 Lie wrapt in their blankets
 Asleep on the hills 20

—What forms are these coming
So white through the gloom ?
What garments out-glistening
The gold-flower'd broom ?

What sweet-breathing presence
Out-perfumes the thyme ?
What voices enapture
The night's balmy prime ?—

'Tis Apollo comes leading
His choir, the Nine 30
—The leader is fairest,
But all are divine.

They are lost in the hollows !
They stream up again !
What seeks on this mountain
The glorified train ?—

They bathe on this mountain,
In the spring by their road ,
Then on to Olympus,
Their endless abode 45

—Whose praise do they mention ?
Of what is it told ?—
What will be for ever ;
What was from of old

First hymn they the Father
Of all things , and then,
The rest of immortals,
The action of men

The day in his hotness,
The strife with the palm ; 50
The night in her silence,
The stars in their calm.

ELEGIAC POEMS

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY.

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill ;
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes !
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropp'd herbage shoot another head
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green,
Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest ! 10

Here, where the reaper was at work of late—
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse, ^{pr}
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use—
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn—
All the live murmur of a summer's day

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,
And here till sun-down. shepherd ! will I be

Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
 And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
 Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep,
 And air-swept hndens yield
 Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
 Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
 And bower me from the August sun with shade.
 And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers 30

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—
 Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
 The story of the Oxford scholar poor,
 Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
 Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
 One summer-morn forsook
 His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-lore,
 And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,
 And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,
 But came to Oxford and his friends no more. 40

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,
 Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
 Met him, and of his way of life enquired;
 Whereat he answer'd, that the gipsy-crew,
 His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
 The workings of men's brains,
 And they can bind them to what thoughts they will
 "And I," he said, "the secret of their art,
 When fully learn'd, will to the world impart,
 But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill" 50

This said, he left them, and return'd no more.—
 But rumours hung about the country-side,
 That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
 Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
 In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey,
 The same the gipsies wore.

Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring ;
 At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
 On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock'd boors
 Had found him seated at their entering, 60

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly
 And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
 And put the shepherds, wanderer ! on thy trace ,
 And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
 I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet place ,
 Or in my boat I lie
 Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer-heats,
 'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
 And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills,
 And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats 70

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground !
 Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
 Returning home on summer-nights, have met
 Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe
 Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
 As the punt's rope chops round ;
 And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
 And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
 Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
 And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream 80

And then they land, and thou art seen no more !—
 Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
 To dance around the Fyfield elm in May, 1
 Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
 Or cross a stile into the public way
 Oft thou hast given them store
 Of flowers—the fial-leaf'd, white anemony,
 Dark bluebells diench'd with dews of summer eves,
 And purple orchises with spotted leaves—
 But none hath words she can report of thee. 90

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
 In June, and many a scythe in sunshin flames,
 Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
 Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering Thames,
 To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,
 Have often pass'd thee near
 Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown ,
 Mark'd thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
 Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air —
 But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone ! 100

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
 Where at her open door the housewife dawns,
 Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
 To watch the threshers in the mossy barns
 Children, who early range these slopes and late
 For cresses from the rills,
 Have known thee eying, all an April-day,
 The springing pastures and the feeding kine ,
 And mark'd thee, when the stars come out and shme,
 Through the long dewy grass move slow away 110

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood—
 Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way
 Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
 With scarlet patches tagg'd and shreds of grey,
 Above the forest-ground called Thessaly—
 The blackbird, picking food,
 Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all ,
 So often has he known thee past him stray,
 Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,
 And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall 120

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
 Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,
 Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge,
 Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow

Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge ?
 And thou hast climb'd the hill,
 And gam'd the white blow of the Cumner range ,
 Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snowflakes fall.
 The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall—
 Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange 30

But what—I dream ! Two hundred years are flown
 Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
 And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
 That thou wert wander'd from the studious walls
 To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-tribe ,
 And thou from earth art gone
 Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid—
 Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
 Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
 Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade 140

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours !
 For what wears out the life of mortal men ?
 'Tis that from change to change their being rolls ;
 'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
 Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
 And numb the elastic powers.
 Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
 And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
 To the just-pausing Genius we remit
 Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been 150

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish, so ?
 Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire ;
 Else wert thou long since number'd with the dead !
 Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire !
 The generations of thy peers are fled,
 And we ourselves shall go ,
 But thou possessest an immortal lot,
 And we imagine thee exempt from age

And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst—what we, alas ! have not 160

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things ,
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.
O life unlike to ours !
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives ,
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope 170

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven ! and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfill'd ;
For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new ,
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day
Ah ! do not we, wanderer ! await it too ? 180

Yes, we await it !—but it still delays,
And then we suffer ! and amongst us one,
Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne ;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days ,
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes 190

This for our wisest ! and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear,
With close-lipp'd patience for our only friend,
Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair—
But none has hope like thine !
Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away 200

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames,
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rife—
Fly hence, our contact fear !
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood !
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude ! 210

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silver'd branches of the glade—
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales ! 220

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly !
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest,
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,

Like us distracted, and like us unblest
 Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
 Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,
 And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made,
 And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
 Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours

230

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles !
 —As some grave Tyrian trader from the sea,
 Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
 Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,
 The fringes of a southward-facing brow
 Among the *Ægean* isles,
 And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
 Freight with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
 Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine—
 And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

240

The young light-hearted masters of the waves—
 And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail ;
 And day and night held on indignantly
 Over the blue Midland waters with the gale,
 Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
 To where the Atlantic raves
 Outside the western straits, and unbent sails
 There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
 Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come,
 And on the beach undid his corded bales

250

THYRSIS

A MONODY, to commemorate the author's friend,
 ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, who died at Florence, 1861

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills !
 In the two Hunkseys nothing keeps the same ;

The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
 And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
 And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks—
 Are ye too changed, ye hills?
 See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
 To-night from Oxford up your pathway strays!
 Here came I often, often, in old days—
 Thyrsis and I, we still had Thyrsis then 10

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
 Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
 The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
 The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
 The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful Thames?—
 This winter-eve is warm,
 Humid the air! leafless, yet soft as spring,
 The tender purple spray on copse and briars!
 And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
 'She needs not June for beauty's heightening, 20

Lovely all times she lies, lovely to-night!—
 Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
 Befalls me wandering through this upland dim.
 Once pass'd I blindfold here, at any hour,
 Now seldom come I, since I came with him.
 That single elm-tree bright
 Against the west—I miss it! is it gone?
 We prized it dearly, while it stood, we said,
 Our friend, the Gipsy-Scholar, was not dead,
 While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on 30

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
 But once I knew each field, each flower, each stack,
 And with the country-folk acquaintance made
 By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick
 Here, too, our shepherd pipes we first assay'd.
 Ah me! this many a year

My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday !
 Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
 Into the world and wave of men depart ,
 But Thyrsis of his own will went away. 40

It irk'd him to be here, he could not rest
 He loved each simple joy the country yields,
 He loved his mates , but yet he could not keep,
 For that a shadow lour'd on the fields,
 Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep
 Some life of men unblest
 He knew, which made him droop, and fill'd his head
 He went , his piping took a troubled sound
 Of storms that rage outside our happy ground ,
 He could not wait their passing, he is dead. 50

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
 When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
 Before the roses and the longest day—
 When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
 With blossoms red and white of fallen May
 And chestnut-flowers are strewn—
 So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
 From the wet field, through the next garden-trees,
 Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I! 60

Too quick despairest, wherefore wilt thou go ?
 Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
 Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
 Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
 Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell,
 And stocks in fragrant blow ,
 Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
 And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
 And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
 And the full moon, and the white evening-star 70

He hearkens not ' light comer, he is flown '
 What matters it ? next year he will return,
 And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
 With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
 And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
 And scent of hay new-mown
 But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see ,
 See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
 And blow a strain the world at last shall heed—
 For Time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd thee ! 80

Alack, for Corydon no rival now !—
 But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
 Some good survivor with his flute would go,
 Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate ,
 And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
 And relax Pluto's brow,
 And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
 Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair
 Are flowers first open'd on Sicilian air,
 And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead 90

O easy access to the hearer's grace
 When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine !
 For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
 She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
 She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
 Each rose with blushing face ;
 She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain
 But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard !
 Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirr'd ,
 And we should tease her with our plaint in vain ! 100

Well ! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
 Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
 In the old haunt, and find our tree-topp'd hill !
 Who, if not I, for questing here hath power ?

I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
 I know the Fyfield tree,
 I know what white, what purple fritillaries
 The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
 Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,
 And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries, 110

I know these slopes ; who knows them if not I ?—
 But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
 With thorns once studded, old, white-blossom'd trees,
 Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried
 High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,
 Hath since our day put by
 The coronals of that forgotten time,
 Down each green bank hath gone the ploughboy's team,
 And only in the hidden brookside gleam
 Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime 120

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
 Above the locks, above the boating throng,
 Unmoor'd our skiff when through the Wytham flats,
 Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among
 And darting swallows and light water-gnats,
 We track'd the shy Thames shore ?
 Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
 Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,
 Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass ?—
 They all are gone, and thou art gone as well ! 130

Yes, thou art gone ! and round me too the night
 In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade
 I see her veil draw soft across the day,
 I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
 The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with grey ;
 I feel her finger light
 Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train, —
 The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,

- The heart less bounding at emotion new,
 And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again. 140
- And long the way appears, which seem'd so short
 To the less practised eye of sanguine youth ;
 And high the mountam-tops, in cloudy air,
 The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,
 Tops in life's morning sun so bright and bare !
 Unbreachable the fort
 Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall ;
 And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
 And near and real the charm of thy repose,
 And night as welcome as a friend would fall 150
- But hush ! the upland hath a sudden loss
 Of quiet !—Look, adown the dusk hill-side,
 A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
 As in old days, jovial and talking, ride !
 From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they come.
 Quick ! let me fly, and cross
 Into yon farther field !—'Tis done , and see,
 Back'd by the sunset, which doth glorify
 The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
 Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree ! the Tree ! 160
- I take the omen ! Eve lets down her veil,
 The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
 The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,
 And in the scatter'd farms the lights come out
 I cannot reach the signal-tree to-night,
 Yet, happy omen, hail !
 Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
 (For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
 The morningless and unawakening sleep
 Under the flowery oleanders pale), 170
- Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there !—
 Ah, vain ! These English fields, this upland dim,

These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
 That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him ;
 To a boon southern country he is fled,
 And now in happier air,
 Wandering with the great Mother's train divine
 (And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
 I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)
 Within a folding of the Apennine,

180

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old !—
 Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
 In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
 For thee the Lityerses-song again
 Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing ,
 Sings his Sicilian fold,
 His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes—
 And how a call celestial round him rang,
 And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang,
 And all the marvel of the golden skies

190

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
 Sole in these fields ' yet will I not despair
 Despair I will not, while I yet descry
 Neath the mild canopy of English air
 That lonely tree against the western sky
 Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
 Our Gipsy-Scholar haunts, outliving thee !
 Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
 Woods with anemones in flower till May,
 Know him a wanderer still, then why not me ?

200

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
 Shy to illumine, and I seek it too
 Thus does not come with houses or with gold,
 With place, with honour, and a flattering crew,
 'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold—
 But the smooth-slipping weeks

Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired ;
 Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
 He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone ;
 Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired 210

Thou too, O Thyr sis, on like quest wast bound ,
 Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour !
 Men gave thee nothing , but this happy quest,
 If men esteem'd thee feeble, gave thee power,
 If men procur'd thee trouble, gave thee rest
 And this rude Cunner ground,
 Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
 Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
 Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime !
 And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields. 220

What though the music of thy rustic flute
 Kept not for long its happy, country tone ;
 Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
 Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
 Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat--
 It fail'd, and thou wast mute !
 Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
 And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
 And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
 Left human haunt, and on alone till night 230

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here !
 'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
 Thyr sis ! in reach of sheep-bells, is my home
 --Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying roar,
 Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
 To chase fatigue and fear
Why farest thou ? I wander'd till I died
Rom on ! The light we sought is shining still
Dost thou ask proof ? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hall-side 240

STANZAS FROM CARNAC

FAR on its rocky knoll descried
Saint Michael's chapel cuts the sky
I climb'd ;—beneath me, bright and wide,
Lay the lone coast of Brittany

Bright in the sunset, weird and still,
It lay beside the Atlantic wave,
As though the wizard Merlin's will
Yet charm'd it from his forest-grave

Behind me on their grassy sweep,
Bearded with lichen, scrawl'd and grey, 10
The giant stones of Carnac sleep,
In the mild evening of the May

No priestly stern procession now
Moves through their rows of pillars old ;
No victims bleed, no Druids bow—
Sheep make the daisied aisles their fold

From bush to bush the cuckoo flies,
The orchis red gleams everywhere ,
Gold furze with broom in blossom vies,
The blue-bells perfume all the air 20

And o'er the glistening, lonely land,
Rise up, all round, the Christian spires ,
The church of Carnac, by the strand,
Catches the westering sun's last fires

And there, across the watery way,
See, low above the tide at flood,
The sickle-sweep of Quiberon Bay,
Whose beach once ran with loyal blood !

Cette, with its glistening houses white,
Curves with the curving beach away 10
To where the lighthouse beacons bright
Far in the bay

Ah ! such a night, so soft, so lone,
So moonlit, saw me once of yore
Wander unquiet, and my own
Vext heart deplore

But now that trouble is forgot ,
Thy memory, thy pain, to-night,
My brother ! and thine early lot,
Possess me quite 20

The murmur of this Midland deep
Is heard to-night around thy grave,
There, where Gibraltar's cannon'd steep
O'erfrowns the wave

For there, with bodily anguish keen,
With Indian heats at last fordome,
With public toil and private teen—
Thou sank'st, alone

Slow to a stop, at mooring grey,
I see the smoke-crown'd vessel come, 30
Slow round her paddles dies away
The seething foam

A boat is lower'd from her side ,
Ah, gently place him on the bench !
That spirit—if all have not yet died—
A breath might quench

Is this the eye, the footstep fast,
The mien of youth we used to see,
Poor, gallant boy !—for such thou wast,
Still art, to me 40

The limbs their wonted tasks refuse ,
The eyes are glazed, thou canst not speak ,
And whiter than thy white burnous
That wasted cheek !

Enough ! The boat, with quiet shock,
Unto its haven coming nigh,
Touches, and on Gibraltar's rock
Lands thee to die

Ah me ! Gibraltar's strand is far,
But farther yet across the brine
Thy dear wife's ashes buried are,
Remote from thine

50

For there, where morning's sacred fount
Its golden rain on earth confers,
The snowy Himalayan Mount
O'ershadows hers

Strange irony of fate, alas,
Which, for two jaded English, saves,
When from their dusty life they pass,
Such peaceful graves !

60

In cities should we English lie,
Where cries are rising ever new,
And men's incessant stream goes by—
We who pursue

Our business with unslackening stride,
Traverse in troops, with care-fill'd breast,
The soft Mediterranean side,
The Nile, the East,

And see all sights from pole to pole,
And glance, and nod, and bustle by,
And never once possess our soul
Before we die.

70

Not by those hoary Indian hills,
Not by this gracious Midland sea
Whose floor to-night sweet moonshine fills,
Should our graves be

Some sage, to whom the world was dead,
And men were specks, and life a play ,
Who made the roots of trees his bed,
And once a day

80

With staff and gourd his way did bend
To villages and homes of man,
For food to keep him till he end
His mortal span

And the pure goal of being reach ;
Hoar-headed, wrinkled, clad in white,
Without companion, without speech,
By day and night

Pondering God's mysteries untold
And tranquil as the glacier-snows
He by those Indian mountains old
Might well repose

90

Some grey crusading knight austere,
Who bore Saint Louis company,
And came home hurt to death, and here
Landed to die ;

Some youthful troubadour, whose tongue
Fill'd Europe once with his love-pain,
Who here outworn had sunk, and sung
His dying strain ;

100

Some girl, who here from castle-bower,
With furtive step and cheek of flame,
Twixt myrtle-hedges all in flower
By moonlight came

To meet her pirate-lover's ship ,
 And from the wave-kiss'd marble stair
 Beckon'd him on, with quivering lip
 And floating hair ;

 And lived some moons in happy trance,
 Then learnt his death and pined away— 110
 Such by these waters of romance
 'Twas meet to lay

 But you—a grave for knight or sage,
 Romantic, solitary, still,
 O spent ones of a work-day age !
 Befits you ill.

 So sang I , but the midnight breeze,
 Down to the brimm'd, moon-charmed main,
 Comes softly through the olive-trees,
 And checks my strain 120

 I think of her, whose gentle tongue
 All plant in her own cause controll'd ;
 Of thee I think, my brother ! young
 In heart, high-soul'd—

 That comely face, that cluster'd brow,
 That cordial hand, that bearing free,
 I see them still, I see them now,
 Shall always see !

 And what but gentleness untired,
 And what but noble feeling warm, 130
 Wherever shown, how'er inspired,
 Is grace, is charm ?

 What else is all these waters are,
 What else is steep'd in lucid sheen,
 What else is bright, what else is fair,
 What else serene ?

Mild o'er her grave, ye mountains, shine .

Gently by his, ye waters, glide !

To that in you which is divine

They were allied

140

RUGBY CHAPEL

NOVEMBER 1857.

COLDLY, sadly descends

The autumn-evening. The field

Strewn with its dank yellow drifts

Of wither'd leaves, and the elms,

Fade into dimness apace,

Silent,—hardly a shout

From a few boys late at their play !

The lights come out in the street,

In the school-room windows,—but cold,

Solemn, unlighted, austere,

10

Through the gathering darkness, arise

The chapel-walls, in whose bound

Thou, my father ! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom

Of the autumn evening But ah !

That word, *gloom*, to my mind

Brings thee back, in the light

Of thy radiant vigour, again ,

In the gloom of November we pass'd

Days not dark at thy side ;

20

Seasons impair'd not the ray

Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear

Such thou wast ! and I stand

In the autumn evening, and think

Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round
 Since thou arosest to tread,
 In the summer-morning, the road
 Of death, at a call unforeseen,
 Sudden For fifteen years, 30
 We who till then in thy shade
 Rested as under the boughs
 Of a mighty oak, have endured
 Sunshine and rain as we might,
 Bare, unshaded, alone,
 Lacking the shelter of thee.

O stroug soul, by what shore
 Tarnest thou now? For that force,
 Surely, has not been left vain!
 Somewhere, surely, afar, 40
 In the sounding labour-house vast
 Of being, is practised that strength,
 Zealous, beneficent, firm!
 Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
 Conscious or not of the past,
 Still thou performest the word
 Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live—
 Prompt, unweaned, as here!
 Still thou upraiest with zeal
 The humble good from the ground, 50
 Sternly represses the bad!
 Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
 Those who with half-open eyes
 Tread the border-land dim
 'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
 Succourest!—this was thy work,
 This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
 Of mortal men on the earth?—

Most men eddy about 60
Here and there—eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing, and then they die—
Perish,—and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild 70
Of the midmost Ocean, have swell'd,
Foam'd for a moment, and gone

And there are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain
Ah yes ! some of us strive 80
Not without action to die
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave !
We, we have chosen our path—
Path to a clear-purposed goal,
Path of advance !—but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth—
Then, on the height, comes the storm 90
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply,
Lightnings dazzle our eyes
Roaring torrents have breach'd

The track, the stream-bed descends
 In the place where the wayfarer once
 Planted his footstep—the spray
 Boils o'er its borders ' aloft
 The unseen snow-beds dislodge
 Their hanging ruin , alas, 100
 Havoc is made in our train !
 Friends, who set forth at our side,
 Falter, are lost in the storm
 We, we only are left !

With frowning foreheads, with lips
 Sternly compress'd, we strain on,
 On—and at nightfall at last
 Come to the end of our way,
 To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks ;
 Where the gaunt and taciturn host 110
 Stands on the threshold, the wind
 Shaking his thin white hairs—
 Holds his lantern to scan
 Our storm-beat figures, and asks
 Whom in our party we bring ?
 Whom we have left in the snow ?

Sadly we answer We bring
 Only ourselves ! we lost
 Sight of the rest in the storm
 Hardly ourselves we fought through 120
 Stripp'd, without friends, as we are
 Friends, companions, and train,
 The avalanche swept from our side

But thou would'st not *alone*
 Be saved, my father ! *alone*
 Conquer and come to thy goal,
 Leaving the rest in the wild.
 We were weary, and we

Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die 130
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand

If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing—to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm !
Therefore to thee it was given 140
Many to save with thyself ,
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd ! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand

And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone ;
Pure souls honour'd and blest
By former ages, who else—
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see— 150
Seem'd but a dream of the heart,
Seem'd but a cry of desire.
Yes ! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me to-day
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous, and arid, and vile :
But souls temper'd with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good, 160
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God ¹—or sons
 Shall I not call you ? because
 Not as servants ye knew
 Your Father's innermost mind,
 His, who unwillingly sees
 One of his little ones lost—
 Yours is the praise, if mankind
 Hath not as yet in its march
 Fainted, and fallen, and died ¹ 170

See ¹ In the rocks of the world
 Marches the host of mankind,
 A feeble, wavering line
 Where are they tending ?—A God
 Marshall'd them, gave them their goal
 Ah, but the way is so long ¹
 Years they have been in the wild ¹
 Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
 Rising all round, overawe ,
 Factions divide them, their host 180
 Threatens to break, to dissolve
 —Ah, keep, keep them combined !
 Else, of the myriads who fill
 That army, not one shall arrive ,
 Sole they shall stray ; in the rocks
 Stagger for ever in vain,
 Die one by one in the waste

Then, in such hour of need
 Of your fainting, dispirited race,
 Ye, like angels, appear, 190
 Radiant with ardour divine ¹
 Beacons of hope, ye appear ¹
 Languor is not in your heart,
 Weakness is not in your word,
 Weariness not on your brow

Ye alight in our van ! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave !
Order, courage, return
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God

200

LATER POEMS

GEIST'S GRAVE

Four years '—and didst thou stay above
The ground, which hides thee now, but four?
And all that life, and all that love,
Were crowded, Geist! into no more?

Only four years those winning ways,
Which make me for thy presence yearn,
Call'd us to pet thee or to praise,
Dear little friend! at every turn?

That loving heart, that patient soul,
Had they indeed no longer span, 10
To run their course, and reach their goal,
And read their homily to man?

That liquid, melancholy eye,
From whose pathetic, soul-fed springs
Seem'd surging the Virgilian cry,
The sense of tears in mortal things—

That steadfast, mournful strain, consoled
By sprits gloriously gay,
And temper of heroic mould—
What, was four years their whole short day? 20

Yes, only four !—and not the course
Of all the centuries yet to come,
And not the infinite resource
Of Nature, with her countless sum

Of figures, with her fulness vast
Of new creation evermore,
Can ever quite repeat the past,
Or just thy little self restore

Stern law of every mortal lot !
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear, 30
And builds himself I know not what
Of second life I know not where.

But thou, when struck thine hour to go,
On us, who stood despondent by,
A meek last glance of love didst throw,
And humbly lay thee down to die.

Yet would we keep thee in our heart—
Would fix our favourite on the scene,
Nor let thee utterly depart
And be as if thou ne'er hadst been. 40

And so there rise these lines of verse
On lips that rarely form them now ,
While to each other we rehearse
Such ways, such arts, such looks hadst thou !

We stroke thy broad brown paws again,
We bid thee to thy vacant chair,
We greet thee by the window-pane,
We hear thy scuffle on the stair.

We see the flaps of thy large ears
Quick raised to ask which way we go ; 50
Crossing the frozen lake, appears
Thy small black figure on the snow !

Nor to us only art thou dear
 Who mourn thee in thine English home ,
 Thou hast thine absent master's tear,
 Dropt by the far Australian foam

Thy memory lasts both here and there,
 And thou shalt live as long as we
 And after that—thou dost not care !
 In us was all the world to thee

60

Yet, fondly zealous for thy fame,
 Even to a date beyond our own
 We strive to carry down thy name,
 By mounded turf, and graven stone

We lay thee, close within our reach,
 Here, where the grass is smooth and warm,
 Between the holly and the beech,
 Where oft we watch'd thy couchant form

Asleep, yet lending half an ear
 To travellers on the Portsmouth road ,—
 There build we thee, O guardian dean,
 Mark'd with a stone, thy last abode !

70

Then some, who through this garden pass,
 When we too, like thyself, are clay,
 Shall see thy grave upon the grass,
 And stop before the stone, and say .

*People who lived here long ago
 Did by this stone, it seems, intend
 To name for future times to know
 The dachs-hound, Geist, their little friend*

80

NOTES.

EARLY POEMS.

UNDER this title stand in the collected editions of Arnold's poems most of the pieces which appeared in the anonymous volume of 1849 (the chief exceptions are *The Strayed Reveller*, *The Sick King in Bokhara*, and *The Forsaken Merman*) and a few others.

QUIET WORK.

This sonnet appeared in the volume of 1849 and was prefixed as an introduction to the volume of *Poems by Matthew Arnold* in 1853. A few alterations have since been made in it, as 'kept at one' for 'served in one,' 'in lasting fruit' for 'in still advance,' 'fitful' for 'senseless.' The idea of the sonnet is one which is characteristic of the poet, compare, for example, the poem called *Self-Dependence*, and the *Lines Written in Kensington Gardens*. Goethe has the same thought about the quiet but unceasing toil of Nature in contrast with the fitful and noisy restlessness of man. Nature works 'ohne Hast, ohne Rast,' in tranquillity though without pause; man is ever wearying himself, and his noisy labour is after all less fruitful.

The sonnet is regularly constructed, with a pause or 'turn' after the octet. In the first part the poet addressing Nature prays her to teach him the lesson how to reconcile two apparently conflicting duties, the duty of toil and the duty of tranquillity. In the latter part he sets forth the contrast between the discordant uproar of man's labour and the silent sleeplessness of Nature and her ministers, who perform after all a far more glorious task.

2. The lesson is *one*, though blown in every wind, that is taught in all the various operations of Nature.

10. From the expression 'fitful uproar' is inferred the idea of fitful labour.

13. Still still, &c. ever

THE CHURCH OF BROU.

In this poem, published in 1853, the author has combined fact with imagination in a way which is a little puzzling to those who know the actual Church of Brou and its history. The Church of Notre Dame de Brou is one of the most remarkable in France, and contains the magnificent monuments of Philibert II, duke of Savoy, of his mother Margaret of Bourbon and of his wife, the celebrated Margaret of Austria. The church was erected by the last-named in memory of her husband, who died September 10th, 1504, about four years after their marriage, of a disorder brought on by drinking cold water when fatigued by hunting. The poet has chosen to represent his church as built in a lonely mountain spot, far off from any town, whereas the actual church is in the suburbs of the town of Bourg-en-Bresse on the way between Macon and Culoz. Similarly the circumstances of the death of the duke are modified in accordance with the poet's fancy, the name of the former duchess who made the vow is turned from Margaret to Maud, and the daughter-in-law who built the church is represented as dying shortly after the death of her husband, whereas Margaret of Austria became ruler of the Netherlands for her brother Philip II of Spain, and died in 1530.

The actual church, which was much admired and talked of by Matthew Arnold, has very rich decorations and fine stained-glass windows. In the choir are the monuments, in the centre that of Philibert with two recumbent figures, by which he is represented on the lower stage and on the upper apparently as waking in bliss. On the right is the tomb of Margaret of Bourbon his mother, and on the left that of Margaret of Austria his widow. The poet, it will be noticed, imagines a single tomb, where the duke and duchess lie side by side.

As to the style of the poem, it recalls in the first part that of the German ballads of the early part of this century, those of Uhland for example, and in the second, some of the earlier poems of Tennyson, especially *The Lady of Shalott*, the rhythm of which is suggested but not actually reproduced. The third is the finest and most original portion of the poem and rises to a high level of It may be observed that in the edition omitted the first and second

parts, and printed the third alone, with the title, *A Tomb among the Mountains*. The poem was again published entire in the edition of 1885

I. The Castle

11. **mullion'd.** A 'mullion' is an upright division of stone between the lights of a window. The literal meaning is 'stump' or 'stock,' because it is as it were the stem from which the tracery above branches out

15. **crisps the forest,** *i.e.* curls and wrinkles the forest leaves, cp 'the crisp woods' in the third part of the poem

28 **weltering** the word means properly to 'roll about,' a frequentative of the older English *walten*, to roll

33 **sconces,** 'candlesticks' properly a sconce is a hidden light or dark lantern. French, *esconce*, Lat. *absconsa*.

35 **dais,** usually the raised platform at the end of the hall upon which the high table stands, but also used of the canopy over a seat of state

106 'Life-like though made of the white marble'

109 **fretwork,** ornamental work of stems interlaced. The word 'fret' is a heraldic term for a kind of grating, from the French *frettes*, Latin *ferretum*, but it has been confused with the English verb 'to fret,' meaning 'to adorn'

112 the St John, 'la Saint-Jean,' *i.e.* Midsummer, the feast of Saint John Baptist being on the 24th of June

II. The Church.

1 **glistening leaden roof,** a contrast to the 'lichen-crust'd leads' which we have in the third part

12 **clips,** 'surrounds and confines.'

22 **dight,** 'adorned,' from the Old English *dihthan*, to set in order.

III. The Tomb

14 **their bloody freight,** *i.e.* the wild boars that they have killed in the chase 'freight,' *i.e.* burden.

31 **the pavement of the courts of Heaven.** Perhaps the poet had in his mind the "paved work of a sapphire stone" (cf l 23), which was seen under the feet of the God of Israel (*Exod.* xxiv 10)

36 **clere-story windows** are the upper range of windows in a church, the clere-story (or clear-story) being that upper level

of the building which is lighted with windows, as opposed to the triforium just below, sometimes called the 'blind-story'

37. *washes* a very expressive word, the sound of the wind in the pines being like the sigh of the sea

41 *glimmering*, a picturesque word used of a dim uncertain light properly a frequentative of 'gleam'; compare 'weltering' above. Note the picturesque beauty of this concluding passage.

REQUIESCAT

12. *laps* This word 'lap' is simply a variation of 'wrap' The Shaksperian use of it, "All thy friends are lapp'd in lead," has perhaps given it an association with death.

13 Her spirit, being large, felt itself 'cabin'd, cribbed, confined,' in the limits of its mortal tenement

16 *vasty*, a variation of 'vast' It seems to indicate also something of mystery. cp Shakspeare, 1 *Henry IV* III 1 52

"I can call spirits from the vasty deep"

TO A GIPSY CHILD BY THE SEA-SHORE.

This, which is one of the most thoughtful and dignified of Arnold's poems, was first published in 1849, and republished in 1855 It was occasioned by the sight of an infant in its gipsy mother's arms on the shore at Douglas in the Isle of Man, where Matthew Arnold with one of his brothers was watching the arrival of the steamer from Liverpool The brother who was in his company, Mr Thomas Arnold, has kindly told me the circumstances He writes. "My mother and all her children were at Douglas for a month in the autumn of 1842, not long after my father's death One day my brother and I went down towards the sea as the boat was coming in There was a great crowd, and, after pushing our way through it for some time, we thought it best to stay where we were In fact, the crowd halted generally Just in front of us was a woman with a child in her arms. One could not have said with certainty that she was a gipsy, but it is likely enough The woman, with the child wrapped in an old cloak, was gazing at the sea and the busy scene on the pier, the child was looking over her left shoulder, and therefore at us The description of the sad little face, over which no smile ever broke, seems to me exactly correct The complexion was sallow, the eyes dark, with black circles round

them Looking towards my brother in a minute or two, I saw that he was completely abstracted So far as I know he never saw the child again, and never heard anything about her." If this poem was actually written in 1842, when Arnold was not yet twenty years old, it must certainly be regarded as a most remarkable production

1 unpractised eyes, that is, eyes that cannot have learnt their sorrow by experience of life.

2 import, 'weight of meaning'

5 The idea of this stanza seems to be, 'Behold the scene around, the passing sails, the sea, the pier, all this has meaning, and so too has thy gloom'

11 annoy. The use of the word here suggests the French *ennui*, which is originally the same word

13 half averse, etc., 'inclined to turn away even from thy mother, who cannot comprehend thy mood.'

18. fantastic sadness. That is, 'My glooms have been but moods of fancied sadness, with no real depth or import.'

19 thine own, 'such as no others have'

20. enhance and glorify, by contrast with the brightness around, to 'enhance' is properly to further, and hence to exalt

21 complexion, 'appearance'

23 rapt, 'carried away' from all else by the intensity of his feeling

26 in an alien planet born, 'born into a world with which his nature is not in harmony.'

29 stoic souls According to the Stoic philosophy all the external things of life are regarded as 'indifferent,' that is, incapable of making a difference to the wise man's happiness. Stoics are 'self-centred,' inasmuch as they consider that the only true good for man is to be found in himself

33 Or do I wait 'Or am I to look on thee as on some grey-haired king, who may set forth to me the various experiences of a long life of thought and action, disentangling the evil from the good'

39 f. 'Thou hast known beforehand what others learn only by bitter experience, namely, how scanty and delusive the harvest of life will prove to be, and yet thou art venturing to set forth upon life'

43 to swell thy strain, &c. to deepen thy mood of sorrow

45 ff. A paraphrase will make clearer the connection of these last stanzas 'Before death shall come and match the gloom of thy aspect with her stillness and darkness, thou wilt either have thought too deeply on the mystery of life or else have ceased to

think at all There are many things mercifully interposed between our senses and our sorrows in this life, yet neither love nor labour can make those who have fallen from a high estate quite forget their former glory; and so though thou mayst be blinded for a time by the struggles or the pleasures of life, yet at last, before the night of death closes in upon thee, thou wilt remember what thou hast once been, and resume the majesty of grief which dignifies thee now'

53 the nectarous poppy lovers use, *i.e.* the intoxicating sweetness which drugs their minds, so that they have no consciousness of the common ills of life, as opium drugs the senses, so that we feel no physical pain

54 dull Lethæan spring, producing by its dull round a forgetfulness such as was thought to come from drinking the water of Lethe

59 the just sun 'just,' because the brightness of which the poet speaks is conceived to visit the lives of all at some time, making no invidious exception

60 A 'reach' is a stretch in a river between two curves

61 blank sunshine The epithet conveys the idea of a brightness by which the sight is dazed

the cloud That sever'd, *etc.*, *i.e.* this cloud of gloom, which marks off one who finds life wanting and turns away from it hopeless

63 The idea is that the ease which comes of commerce with the world will lessen the grace of this melancholy, and the wisdom which now seems to foreknow the vanity of hope will altogether depart, when the mind becomes occupied with worldly cares, being too high a thing to share that lodging with them

66 in thy success, thy chain because success in the struggle of life will be seen to have bound the soul more and more to that world from which at first it seemed to stand aloof This mood of sorrow is a truer and wiser one than any which tends to satisfaction with the world and with life.

NARRATIVE POEMS

BALDER DEAD

This poem, published in 1855, is an admirable rendering in the classical style of the Northern myth of Balder, and while keeping close to the Norse mythology it is full of Homeric echoes and, in fact, the spirit of the older Greek religion is in

many respects strikingly akin to that of the Eddas. A few parallels from Homer have been quoted in the notes to this edition, and many more might be found.

The author writes to his sister, December 1855, "I think *Balder* will consolate the peculiar sort of reputation that I got by *Sohrab and Rustum*, and many will complain that I am settling myself permanently in that field of antiquity, as if there were no other. [Arthur Stanley] likes *Balder* as a whole better than *Sohrab*, but thinks it too short, and this is true too, I think, and I must some day add a first book with an account of the circumstances of the death of Balder. Mallet and his version of the *Edda* is all the poem is based upon" (*Letters of Matthew Arnold*, Vol. 1, p. 47).

The author quotes in illustration of the poem the following passage from the prose *Edda*, that is, the ancient Icelandic account of the Scandinavian religion.

"Balder tho' Good! having been tormented with terrible dreams, indicating that his life was in great peril, communicated them to the assembled Æsir, who resolved to conjure all things to avert from him the threatened danger. Then Friggæ exacted an oath from fire and water, from iron, and all other metals, as well as from stones, earths, discases, beasts, birds, poisons, and creeping things, that none of them would do any harm to Balder. When this was done, it became a favourite pastime of the Æsir, at their meetings, to get Balder to stand up and serve them as a mark, some hurling darts at him, some stones, while others hewed at him with thou swords and battle-axes, for do what they would, none of them could harm him, and this was regarded by all as a great honour shown to Balder. But when Loki beheld the scene he was sorely vexed that Balder was not hurt. Assuming, therefore, the shape of a woman, he went to Fensalir, the mansion of Friggæ. That goddess, when she saw the pretended woman, inquired of her if she knew what the Æsir were doing at their meetings. She replied, that they were throwing darts and stones at Balder without being able to hurt him.

"'Ay,' said Friggæ, 'neither metal nor wood can hurt Balder, for I have exacted an oath from all of them.'

"'What!' exclaimed the woman, 'have all things sworn to spare Balder?'

"'All things,' replied Friggæ, 'except one little shrub that grows on the eastern side of Valhalla, and is called Mistletoe, and which I thought too young and feeble to crave an oath from.'

"'As soon as Loki heard this he went away, and, resuming his natural shape, cut off the mistletoe, and repaired to the place where the gods were assembled. There he found Hodur standing apart, without partaking of the sports, on account of his blindness, and going up to him said, 'Why dost thou not also throw something at Balder?'

“ ‘Because I am blind,’ answered Hodur, ‘and see not where Balder is, and have, moreover, nothing to throw with’

“ ‘Come, then,’ said Loki, ‘do like the rest, and show honour to Balder by throwing this twig at him, and I will direct thy arm toward the place where he stands’

“ Hodur then took the mistletoe, and, under the guidance of Loki, darted it at Balder, who, pierced through and through, fell down lifeless.”

I. Sending

6 Lok the Accuser. The *Edda* says “Some reckon Lok in the number of the Gods, others call him the calumniator of the Gods, the accuser of Gods and men. He surpasses all in that science which is called cunning and perfidy.” He is, in fact, a kind of spirit of evil, the father of the wolf Fenris, of the great Serpent of Midgard, and of Hela or Death

11 Valhalla is one of the palaces assigned by Odín to the heroes who have fallen in battle, who feast there with the Gods

14 gold-rimmed skulls The ancient Northern practice of making a drinking-cup of the skull of a slain enemy is well known. It enters, for example, into the story of the Lombard King Alboin, who was killed by his wife Rosamund, he having made a drinking-cup of her father's skull and caused her to drink from it unwittingly. In the song of Ragnar Lodbrog occur these words “Soon in the splendid abode of Odín we shall drink beer out of the skulls of our enemies”

15 Cp Hom *Il.* xxiii 154 “And now would the light of the sun have set upon them wailing, if Achilles,” etc

16 Odín (or Woden), the supreme God of the Teutonic religion, the ‘All-father,’ or ‘Father of the ages.’ The fourth day of our week is called after him

19 In Homer the Gods are themselves ἀκηδέες, ‘free from sorrow,’ though to mortals they have given woes enough.

22 so bright, so loved a God “He is most fair to view, and so bright that he darts forth rays of light” (*Edda*) Balder represents perhaps the brightness of the sun's warmth in summer

24 The Nornies “Of the Nornies or Destinies some are of the race of the Gods, others of the elves or of the dwarves. They are present at the birth of every child to determine his fate. Those who are of a good origin dispense good destinies, but those men to whom misfortunes happen ought to ascribe them to the evil Nornies” (*Edda*) Arnold here represents them as spinning the thread of man's doom, like the three fates of classical mythology, and in the *Edda* also the chief of the

Nornies are three in number, Urtha, Verthandi, and Skulda, the Past, Present, and Future they are in fact the weird sisters

28 The *Edda* teaches that one day the monsters and giants of the earth shall make war on the Gods, the world shall be destroyed, and Gods, heroes and men shall perish. See Part III, ll 474 ff of this poem

33. another's portion, 'the doom assigned to another' cp. the use of the Greek word *μοῖρα*, which means 'portion,' for destiny

41 Bring wood, etc It was a Northern custom to place the body of a slain warrior on a funeral pile in a ship, and having lighted the pile to push the vessel out to sea Balder's ship is represented as the largest in the world

45 for that is what the dead desire Cp Hom *Il* xvi 675, τὸ γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ θανάπτων, 'for that is the honour due to the dead'

47 Sleipner, the best of all horses, said to have had eight feet, but this perhaps is only a figure of speech to express his swiftness.

49 Lidskialf is the palace of Odin When he is there seated on his throne, he thence discovers every country and sees all the actions of men With this passage may be compared Hom *Il* xiii 1 ff, thus translated by Mr Lang "Now Zeus after that he had brought the Trojans and Hector to the ships, left them to their toil and endless labour there, but elsewhere again he turned his shining eyes, and looked upon the land of the Thracian horse-breeders, and the Mysians, fierce fighters hand-to-hand, and the proud Hippemolgoi that drank mare's milk, and the Abioi, the most righteous of men. Nor did he turn his shining eyes any more at all towards Troy, for he did not think," etc

52 Midgard, i e 'middle court' (or 'dwelling'), the fortress built by the Gods against the giants for the children of men to dwell in

53 conjuring Lapps Lapland has always been famous for its witches, or rather wizards

57 Ida's plain, the place where the Gods had their dwelling Cp Part III, l 537

60 think of Balder's pyre Cp. the Homeric *μῆσασθαι σίτου* (*φυλακῆς, χάρμης*, etc.), 'to think of food (watch, battle, etc.).'

pyre, i e 'funeral-pile.'

67. the boar Serimner's flesh The *Edda* says "The number of the heroes can never be so great but the flesh of the wild boar Serimner will suffice to sustain them; which, though dressed every morning, becomes entire again every night."

68. the Valkyries "There are also many virgins who minister in Valhalla, pouring out ale for the heroes and taking care of the cups and what belongs to t^h table. These goddesses are called the Valkyries. Odin sends them into the fields of battle to make choice of those who are to be slain and to bestow the victory." See Part II, ll 19, 20 of this poem.

crowd'd their horns a Homeric expression, like κρητῆρας ἐπετρέψαντο ποτοίοις. It means 'filled full then drinking-horns'

mead is said in the *Edda* to be the usual drink of the heroes in Valhalla. It is obtained by milking the she-goat that feeds on the leaves of the tree Lerada. Beer, however, is quite as often mentioned.

69 pent-up hearts, hearts in which the grief was confined and not allowed to show itself

73 Asgard, i.e. 'God-court,' the city of the Gods or Æsir.

84 Fensaler, i.e. 'divine abode,' the palace of Frigga, the Earth goddess and wife of Odin, here called Frea. She was very commonly confused with Freya, the Goddess of Love, and hence the day of the week which is named after her was called in Latin, *dies Veneris*. The distinction, however, is preserved in this poem (Part III, ll 90 ff.)

93. revolving things to come. Frigga knew all the destinies of men, as it is said

" Weirdest all
Methinks Frigg knoweth,
But telleth them never "

95. bale, 'evil,' 'destruction.' For the sentiment cp. Hom. *Il.* I 352, Μητρὲς, ἐπεὶ μὲν ἕρεκές γε μινυυθὰδὺν περ' ἐόντα, κ.τ.λ.

101. The foe, the accuser, etc. Repeated from l 38, in the epic style, so in l. 126, "so bright, so loved a God."

108 See note on l 93

109 Hela, 'Death.' The English 'hell' is the same word, meaning that which hides.

114 long portion'd with, 'destined long beforehand to'. cp. l. 33. So Hom. *Il.* XXII 179, πάλαι πεπωρωμένον ἀίσῃ.

115 fill another's life, 'fill the place in life belonging to another.'

124 the darkness of the final times. See l. 28 ff. What is referred to is the 'darkness of the Gods,' the Gotterdammerung, when the monstrous powers of nature shall destroy the Gods and the world. See Part III, ll 68, 474, etc.

130 still, 'ever.'

141 the bridge Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch. The bridge Bifrost, the best of all bridges, was built by the Gods as

a way from Heaven to Earth. It is by some called the Rainbow. Heimdall is the watchman of the Gods, who guards the bridge lest any giants should attempt to pass over it. He sees a hundred miles around him both by night and day; he hears the grass grow, and the blast of his horn is heard in all worlds.

151 **Hela's realm** Nifelheim, the land of cold and darkness, whither go the ghosts of those who have not died in battle. The Norse mythology very naturally placed this cheerless abode of the dead in the far north.

157. **Confronts the Dog and Hunter**, that is, the constellation of the Dog and of Orion, which are near to one another, and nearly opposite the Bear. cp *II XVIII* 487, "And the Bear, which they also call the Wam, which turns about in the same place and watches Orion, and is alone without portion in the baths of Ocean."

158 **And is alone**, etc. This is the classical description of the constellation of the Bear, but it is not specially appropriate from the point of view of the dwellers in the northern latitudes, where a good many other constellations about the Pole never disappear from the sky.

172 **Nifheim** to be read as three syllables in the verse. It means 'the house of mist.'

173 **the streams of Hell**. 'Hell' is the same word as 'Hela,' and, in fact, in the *Edda* the place and the person are not very clearly distinguished.

174 Compare Hom. *Od. xi.* 49, *νεκύων ἀμενηνὰ κάρηνα*.

203 **loathéd feasts**, because of the pent-up sorrow in their hearts.

208 **Breidablik**. The name means 'broad splendours.'

211 **Postures of runes**, that is, arrangements of letters. The mysterious art of writing was conceived to have a close connection with magic. The word 'rune' itself means a mystery or secret conference, connected with the English word 'rune,' meaning 'whisper.' Hence it was used for mysterious symbols of any kind. When Odin desires to raise the dead he does so by means of runes.

215 **bespake him**, 'spoke to him,' so in Part II, l. 179.

219 In Homer also the Gods have each his own house; cp *Il. i.* 605 "Now when the bright light of the sun was set, these went each to his own house to sleep."

238 Compare l. 191.

241. **hest**, 'command.'

271 **Scalds**, i. e. bards who celebrated the deeds of warriors.

275 dirge, 'funeral song', properly 'Dnige,' from the first word of the anthem, 'Dirige nos, Dominus meus,' in the office for the dead. It is from *Psalm* v 8, "Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness"

276 satisfied with wail A Homeric expression; cp *Od* xix 213 "And she when she was satisfied with tearful wail," etc

283 In garb, in form, etc. Compare with this the appearance of the spirit of Patroclus to Achilles in Hom *Il* xxiii 65 ff, "And there came to him the soul of the unhappy Patroclus, in everything like him in stature and in his fair eyes and in his voice, and such dress had he on as he was used to wear and he stood above his head and spake to him thus 'Sleepest thou, and wast thou forgetful of me, Achilles?'" and then he proceeds to ask that his ashes may be united at last with those of his friend

332 Cp Hom *Il* xliiii 99 "So he spake and stretched forth with his dead hands, but did not take hold of him, but his soul went like smoke beneath the earth with a shrill cry" Arnold has taken the comparison to smoke and expanded it happily in the following lines

II Journey to the Æcad

14 the daily fray According to the *Edda* the enjoyments of the heroes consist in drinking and fighting, the dead and wounded of each day being restored at evening

21 Skulda is that one of the Nornir who presides over the future (the name is connected with the word 'shall') She is said to ride with the Valkyries to choose the slain and decide the victory

33 the ash Igdrasil was the greatest of trees, "its boughs are spread over the whole world and stand above heaven," under it the Gods hold their doom every day Under one of the roots of it is Mimir's spring, where knowledge is hidden, and Mimir himself, who is full of wisdom because he drinks of it Cp Part iii, l 219 ff

36 Gladhheim "They built a court in which their seats stand, twelve others besides the highest seat that the All-Father hath that house is the best made on earth and the greatest, and it is all within and without built of gold in the place men call Gladhheim" (*Edda*) This was the hall of the Gods that of the Goddesses was Vingolf

44 On the twelfth day The author puts off the funeral rites of Balder until after Hermod's return In the *Edda* they take place at once, indeed, it is questionable whether according to that system Balder would have been found in Hela's realm until

his funeral rites had been accomplished, any more than Patroclus could enter the gates of Hades while yet unburnt.

47 This scene of wood-cutting for Balder's pyre is not from the *Edda*, but from Homer. See *Il.* xxiii. 114 ff., where trees are cut down for the pyre of Patroclus. "And they went with wood-cutting axes in their hands and well-woven ropes, and mules went before them; and much they went up and down and sideways and slantways, but when they came to the glens of many-fountained Ida, forthwith they hastened to cut the high-folaged oaks with the edged bronze, and these fell with a great crash, and then the Achæans split in two and tied to the mules, and the mules tore up the ground with their feet desiring to reach the plain through the close thickets; and all the wood-cutters carried logs."

48 The *Edda* says of Thor "He has three things of great price, one of them is the hammer Mjollnir, which the giants know when it is raised aloft, and that is no wonder, for it has split many a skull of their fathers or friends. The second costly thing that he has is the best of all strength-belts, but the third thing he has is his iron gloves," etc. Thor is the God of the thunder (*thunor* in Old English), after whom is named in Germanic languages the fifth day of the week. His hammer, which is thrown and returns to his hand again, is the thunder-bolt; the thunder is the driving of his ear.

53 A good translation of the Homeric line, πολλὰ δ' ἀνάντα κάταντα πέραντά τε δόχμαδ' ἤλθον.

63. **darking** here only a poetical variation of 'dark,' but more properly used of persons, meaning 'in the dark.'

91 ff. The simile is very picturesque, and its picturesqueness is heightened by its detachment, so to speak; that is, the resemblance is in one point only, the blocking of the way, and the effect of the description is not so much to enforce the appropriateness of the comparison as to give the simile independent life of its own. This also is after the model of Homer, whereas Virgil and modern poets generally tend to a more elaborate adaptation.

95 **hinds**, i.e. 'peasants': in older English 'hine' means a domestic servant.

101 ff. "She asked him his name and kin, and said that the day before there rode over the bridge five bands of dead men, 'but my bridge rings not save under thee alone, and thou hast not the hue of dead men'" (*Edda*).

113. **high-roof'd**, like the Homeric ὑψηροφής.

123. "But beneath and northward lieth Hela's way" (*Edda*).

125, Nor lit with sun Rather a harsh use of 'nor,' combining the words that follow it with the epithets which stand before 'mist' in the preceding line

133 there, i.e. 'thither'

139 ff. So Odysseus, when about to visit the spirits in Hades, sailed through regions of darkness and mist till he reached the limits of the Ocean *Od* xi 12 ff.

140 fared, 'journeyed'

145 ff. "Then rode Hermod thence till he came to Hela's gate then he got off his horse and girthed him up fast, and got up and cheered him with his spurs, but the horse leapt so hard over the gate that he came never near it" (*Edda*).

151 In the *Edda* twelve rivers are said to flow from the fountain of Vergelmer through Nifelheim

157 The picturesqueness and beauty of this simile is the poet's own, but the idea of the shades of the dead as fluttering about like bats or birds and uttering a squeaking or twittering sound, is taken from Homer in the first place. The whole of this description should be compared with the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*

166 their star, 'their fortune.' It was only those who died in battle who were chosen to feast in Odín's hall.

172 in sloughs interr'd alive, the punishment of cowards among the ancient Germans. cp Tacitus, *Germania*, 12, "ignavos et imbelles et corpore infames coeno ac palude mixta insuper crate mergunt," i.e. they bury them in a slough with a hurdle thrown on the top

179 bespake him, 'spoke to him'

187 clasp'd her knees the Homeric attitude of entreaty

206 ff. The Gods, hearing of the birth of the children of Lok by the witch or giantess Angerbode, and knowing that great evil would come of them, sent and took them from Jotunheim where they were bred, "and Odin cast the Serpent into the deep sea that lieth about all lands, and he waxed so that he lieth in the midst of the sea round all the earth and holdeth his tail in his mouth. This is he that is called Midgardsworm. Hela he cast into Niflheim, and gave her power over nine worlds, that she should share all those abodes among the men who are sent to her, and these are they who die of sickness or old, and she hath there great domains, and her walls are high and her gates huge." The Wolf was bred up with the Gods, but he waxed so strong that they resolved at length to bind him, and this they did by cunning and enchantment (*Edda*)

215 f. The chain with which the wolf Fenris was at length bound, after he had broken the strongest fetters of iron, was

a magic fetter called Gleipnir, as soft and smooth as a silken sting, and when he was bound, the Gods took the chain that was attached to it and drew it through a great rock and fastened it deep in the earth

216 limber means 'flexible,' 'pliant,' connected in etymology with 'lump'

219. him too foes await, etc. The *Edda* relates how, after the death of Balder, the Gods took vengeance on Lok, who, being pursued, took the likeness of a salmon, and was at length caught with nets and bound in a cave upon pointed rocks. There is a serpent above him who drops venom over his face, and he is so racked by the venom that the whole earth shakes, and this is called earthquake. There he lies till the twilight of the Gods

224 Muspel is the land of fire and brightness, far away in the South. From it, according to the Norse mythology, would one day come those who should fight with the Gods and heroes, and destroy Heaven and Earth. Lok and his children, the Serpent and the Wolf, with other monstrous powers, shall fight with the Gods and slay them, though slain themselves, and at length Surtur, the chief of the sons of Muspel, shall destroy all the world by fire. The idea of a general conflagration as the end of all things, is found also in classical mythology

"Esse quoque in fatis reminiscitur adfore tempus,
Quo mare, quo tellus correptaque regia caeli
Ardeat"

As to Lok guiding Muspel's children to their bourne, the *Edda* says, quoting from an ancient poem

"Muspell's peoples
Will come o'er the sea,
But Lok steereth"

Lok himself was to slay Heimdall, the warder of the Gods, and to be slain by him

bourne means properly 'boundary,' hence 'aim' or 'object.'

238. beweeep, 'weep for,' on the model of 'bemoan'

245. withheld, i.e. 'forbidden'

265 ff. Compare with this the feelings expressed by Achilles Hom. *Od.* xi. 487 ff. "Console me not for death, illustrious Odysseus, I would rather be a labourer and serve another, and be a man with small estate, who had not much living, than rule over all the spirits of the dead who have perished"

274 this ring. In the *Edda* the ring which Balder sends to Odin is that which Odin had laid upon his funeral pyre see note on l. 44

280 inscrutable regard, that is, a look of which the meaning could not be fathomed

295 And as a traveller, etc. This is one of those pictures which Arnold seems to have seen himself in nature, and treasured up in his memory for reproduction. Many beautiful examples of such complete pictures occur in his poems, for example, ll 91 ff. and 157 ff. of this part of the present poem.

III Funeral

6 ff The manner in which the simile is introduced by being put into the mouth of Lok, is dramatic in its effect. Observe, as before, the completeness of the picture, and the detachment of the simile itself from the circumstances which occasion it. See note on Part II, l 91.

29 against fate, before thy day Cp the Homeric *ὕπερ μῦρον*, and Vug *En* iv 696

“nec Fato, merita nec morte peribat,
Sed misera ante diem”

30 soft, that is, in under tones, aside

49. may keep, i.e. ‘may hold good’

55 that we may turn from grief. The spirit of the Norseman, as that of the Homeric warrior, is averse to any long continuance of mourning for the dead. It is right that the dead should have certain observances and a certain due share of lamentation, “for that is what the dead desire,” but tears for the dead must not be allowed to keep the living from their proper pursuits, whether war or hunting or feasting. Odin’s wish is to give Balder all that he can justly claim, but at the same time to burn his corpse out of their sight as soon as may be, so that the daily round might go on as before. The Noise Gods are not ashamed of shedding tears, but they dry them soon and do not allow grief to gnaw at the heart, however good the friend or however loved the God whom they bewailed.

68 the twilight of the Gods See Part I, l 124.

73 “Thor has two goats and a car which he drives in, and the goats draw the car” (*Edda*)

swaying, ‘guiding’ the word properly means to ‘bend’

90 Freya, the Goddess of Love and Beauty, often confused with Frigga or Frea, but really distinct. “Freya is ranked with Frigg, she is wedded with the man Oder”. Oder has fared abroad a far way, but Freya weeps for him and her tears are red gold. Freya hath many names, and the reason of this is that she gave herself many names as she fared through unknown peoples in search of Oder” (*Edda*).

96 **Vanadis on earth** The *Edda* simply gives Vanadis as one of her many names. In assigning to the Goddess a heavenly and an earthly name the poet is following Homeric precedents: the river which men call 'Seamander' is by the Gods called Xanthos (*Il.* xx 74), the bird which the Gods call 'chalkis' is by men called 'kymindis' (*Il.* xiv 291).

126 **Regner** This is the celebrated Regnei (or Ragnar) Lodbrog, whose song, supposed to be uttered when he had been thrown into a dungeon full of serpents by Ella, king of Northumbria, is among the most celebrated remains of Northern poetry. The Danish invasions of England were supposed to have had for their motive the desire of the sons of Regner to avenge his death. It is perhaps rather bold on the part of the poet to bring down the myth of Balder's death to so late a time, but after all Regner himself is a somewhat mythical hero.

128 **Living, that is, 'while he lived'**

133. **Brage, or Bragi**, was famous for wisdom in speech, and especially he was skilled in song. He was the first of bards or 'scalds.'

149 **my shepherdess, Aslauga** Aslauga, daughter of Sigurd, is said to have been bled up as a peasant girl and to have been loved by Ragnar Lodbrog.

175 It is necessary for the rhythm that 'fire' should be read as a dissyllable similarly 'Niflheim' in this poem is regularly of three syllables, so 'Ireland,' in *Tristram and Iseult*, e.g. "From Ireland to Cornwall boie."

175 ff. According to the *Edda* the Gods, being unable to launch Balder's ship, sent for a witch from Jotunheim, "who pushed it forward so at the first touch, that fire sprang out of the rollers," that is the balks of timber laid on the sand for the ship to slide over. Thor was so angry at her success, when he had failed, that he grasped his hammer and would have slain her, but the other Gods entreated peace for her. Here the poet makes the sparks fly from the trench which the ship ploughed in the sand, a less natural idea.

194 **lurid** seems to mean originally 'pale yellow,' and it is used here much in the same way as by Pliny, when, speaking of the darkness and dust-clouds gradually dispersing after the eruption of Vesuvius, he says, "sol etiam effulsit, luridus tamen."

212 **the sacred morn** a Homeric expression, *ιερον ημαρ*

217 **To the ash Igdrasil, etc.** See note on Part II, l. 33

226 **both have grounds**, i.e. there are grounds for either decision.

236 ff. With this passage compare Hom. *Il.* xxii 167 ff. "Then among them first spake the Father of gods and men

'Alas ' I see the man whom I love chased round the wall, and my heart is woe for Hector But come, give your counsel, Gods, and devise whether we shall save him from death,' etc And him answered again the bright-eyed goddess Athene 'O Father, lord of the bright lightning and the dark cloud, what a thing hast thou said ' A man that is a mortal, long ago doomed by fate, would'st thou release again from evil death ' Do it but not all we other gods approve '”

253 The sons of Bor were Odin, Vili, and Ve They slew the giant Ymir, and with his body they filled up the 'yawning void', of his flesh they made the earth, of his bones the rocks, of his hair the trees, of his blood the sea His skull formed the vault of heaven, and his brains the clouds

262 Muspel See note on Part II, 1 224

270 field of pirates is one of the Norse poetical expressions for the sea

286 See note on Part I, 1 93

307 And as in winter, etc Since Balder represents the summer sun or the warmth of summer, this simile is peculiarly appropriate, indeed one is tempted to think that this part of the myth must have referred originally to the dripping thaw after the winter's frost, which seems to promise a return of summer, though the fulfilment of the promise is often long deferred

324 "He was born and bred in Vanaheim, but the Vanir gave him as an hostage to the Gods and he it was that set the Gods and the Vanir at one again " (*Edda*)

339 fastidious sprites It may be doubted whether 'sprites' is a word that can properly be used of the Norse Gods, at least there is nothing very sprightly about them

340 boor, 'peasant.'

344 squeamish means properly 'dizzy,' 'faint,' from a word that means 'swimming in the head'; hence it expresses distaste or disgust, 'overnice,' 'fastidious'

352 Cp the verses quoted in the *Edda*

"Thok will bewail
with dry eyes
Balder's balefire
Nor quick nor dead gain I
by man's son
Let Hel hold what she has "

408 have any cause, i e 'if any have cause.'

412 fellow-sport of Lok, because both had perished helplessly by the contrivance of Lok So we say that a vessel which is driven about steerless is the sport of the winds and sea

451. Forset, thy son. "Forseti is the son of Balder and Nanna he hath the hall in heaven hight Glitnir, and all that come to him with knotty lawsuits go away set at one again" (*Edda*). The same function is now performed by Balder for the spirits of the dead.

466 As the spirits of the dead are feeble and shadowy, so are their quarrels and hates, compared to those of the upper world

470 function, that is to say, the duties of an office, the office of arbitrator in the disputes of the dead

475 the fiery band, i.e. the sons of Muspel See note on Part II, I 224

477 Fenris. See note on Part II, II 206, 215

478 the giant Rymer The *Edda* says that the giant Rymer shall steer the ship Nagelfar, made of dead men's nails, and so shall come and join in the war against the Gods

479 the great serpent. "Midgardsworm," as he is called in the *Edda*, who lies at the bottom of ocean and surrounds the whole earth see note on Part II, I 206

492. Vidar, called the silent, is next in strength to Thor "He has a very thick shoe, on him the Gods have much trust in all straits"

Tyr is the War-god, he is one-handed, because when Fenris was bound by the Gods, he laid his right hand in the mouth of the wolf, as a pledge that they would release him again. Thus they afterwards refused to do, and Fenris bit off the hand. He is the same as Tiw, after whom the third day of the week is named

496. Compare Part II, I 5.

501 it were, 'it would be'

503 ff The poet attributes to Balder feelings which elsewhere he expresses in his own person see, for example, the *Lines written in Kensington Gardens*, II. 21-28

525 ff. Vidar and Vali, it is said, will survive the destruction, and also Thor's two sons, who will bring with them his hammer, and these will be joined by Balder and Hoder. They will talk over old tales and of that which has come to pass, and they will find in the grass those 'golden tables' which the Gods once had (*Edda*)

527 ff "The earth shoots up then from the sea, and it is green and fair, and the fields grow unsown" (*Edda*)

530 a seed of man Two of the sons of men, Lif and Leifdrasir, will have escaped destruction, and from them will spring again the races of the world

556 Fain had he, i.e. 'gladly would he have'

558 *Then*. The emphatic position seems meant to indicate that what was their portion then was not their final destiny, and the simile which follows implies that the image of the far-distant future and the bright new world spoken of by Balder is meant to remain most clearly before the mind. Thus it is which corresponds to the "warmer lands and coasts that keep the sun" of the simile, and beside the anticipation of this the present brightness of Heaven is faint and pale, and the present gloom of Hell is of no account. The point of the comparison does not lie merely in the yearning of Hermod to join his kin, for that he would do equally by his return to Heaven.

SAINT BRANDAN

The Voyage of Saint Brandan in search of the Earthly Paradise among the isles of the western ocean was a favourite subject of mediæval legend, and every kind of traveller's tale connected with the sea was introduced into it. He is supposed to have lived in Ireland, and to have voyaged northwards past the Hebrides into unknown seas. He is said to have seen the soul of Judas on a wave-swept rock in the ocean, with a large stone for his seat and over his head a piece of cloth suspended, which partly protected him and partly added to his discomfort by flapping in his face. This latter was a cloak which he once gave to a leper in charity; but though he had pity on the leper, he bought the cloak not with his own money, but with that of Christ and the other apostles, whose purse he kept. The stone was one which he had taken and put for a stepping-stone in a marshy place. The moral is the same as we have here, that no act of goodness, however small, will go unrewarded. The respite from hell-fire, however, is due in the legend not to any act of goodness, but to the mercy of our Lady, and it is more extensive than is represented in the poem. Arnold's story is in this respect an improvement on the legend, and his introduction of the iceberg is highly effective. The poem was first published in 1867.

2 *The brotherhoods of saints*, that is, the communities of monks in the island monasteries.

5 ff Observe the completeness of the picture in this stanza.

11 *hurting*. The word 'hurtle' is properly a frequentative of 'hurt,' with the sense of dashing against. Hence it is used of violent motion or clashing encounter.

THE NECKAN

The 'Niehus,' 'Necker,' or 'Nek,' is the water-spirit of Teutonic mythology, hence the modern German *Nixe*. Such

creatures were conceived to have special delight in music and song. The popular idea about them was that, though doomed to perdition, they might under certain circumstances be saved. In Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology* we have the following story: "Two boys were playing by the riverside, the Neck sat there touching his harp, and the children cried to him, 'What do you sit and play here for, Neck?' You know you will never be saved." The Neck began to weep bitterly, threw his harp away, and sank to the bottom. When the boys got home, they told their father what had happened. The father, who was a priest, said, 'You have sinned against the Neck, go back and comfort him, and tell him he may be saved.' When they returned to the river, the Neck sat on the bank, weeping and wailing. The children said, 'Do not cry so, poor Neck, father says that your Redeemer liveth too.' Then the Neck exclaimed joyfully, and played charmingly till long after sunset." Grimm adds, "I do not know that anywhere in our legends it is so pointedly expressed how badly the heathen stand in need of the Christian religion, and how mildly it ought to meet them" (Vol. II, p. 494, English translation). The idea of water-spirits wandering among men, and endeavouring to become one of them by intermarriage or otherwise, occurs often in German tales.

This poem has undergone some interesting changes since it was first published in 1853. Two whole stanzas have been added, and they are those which most definitely strike the note of hope for the 'lost sea-creature,' viz. the fourteenth, beginning, "But, lo, the staff it budded," and the sixteenth, "He wept: 'The earth hath kindness,'" etc.

53 But, lo, the staff. A similar incident occurs in the legend of Tannhauser, when the Pope declares the impossibility of the sinner obtaining pardon.

55 ruth, i.e. 'pity,' 'mercy.'

59 But Neckan, etc. There is perhaps some inconsistency between the new stanzas and the old, after the assurance of salvation given by the miracle of the budding staff, the grief ought to have been abated.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

In this poem, published in 1840, the same idea occurs as in the last, of sea-creatures who intermarry with mortals and complain of the hard-heartedness of their human mates, from whom they are separated by barriers of religion. It is the gem of these shorter narrative poems, admirable for its simple pathos as well as for the picturesqueness of the descriptions.

37. *the spent lights* the lights are faunter down below and broken up into many quivering rays by the movement of the water

40 *ooze*, properly 'moisture,' but it is especially used for the soft mud at the bottom of deep water

42 *bask* The word means originally to 'bathe oneself,' being a reflexive form of 'bathe'; hence it is used of bathing in the sunshine Here the sense is, of course, the usual one of basking in the sun.

68 *We went up the beach*, etc The original Teutonic idea of a sea spirit does not include the notion of a fish-like form, and consequently Mermen and Mermaids (but they are commonly conceived as male) can, and often do, come on shore and associate with men.

96 *Till the spindle drops*. The first edition had by an oversight, "Till the shuttle falls," as if the work had been weaving

116 *We shall see*, etc Note the picturesque quality of these four lines

133. *hie*, 'hasten'

SONNETS

The construction of Arnold's later sonnets is, for the most part, regular, that is, they usually have a pause and a 'turn' after the first eight lines, as is usual in those English sonnets which are not of the Shakesperian form This rule, however, which was not recognized at all in his earlier sonnets, is never very rigidly kept, and in the first of these which follow, the turn is not till after the eleventh line The rhyming is generally on the same system as we have it in this first sonnet, but the last six lines are subject to variation in this respect These sonnets were published in 1867

AUSTERITY OF POETRY.

1. *That son of Italy*· Giacopone di Todi, a saint as well as a poet He was converted to the religious life on the occasion of the death of his wife, and joined the order of St Francis His religious poems, though written in a rude style, have much energy and fervour He died in 1306

7 *gauds*, 'ornaments,' or, more particularly, 'jewels' The words 'joy' and 'jewel' are also derived by a different channel from the Latin *gaudium*

13 a hidden ground Of thought, etc That is, however bright and beautiful the spirit of poetry may appear to the outer world, for the poets themselves it ought to have also a severe aspect, and to suggest not enjoyment only, but chastening thought and self-denying labour

A PICTURE AT NEWSTEAD

Newstead Abbey in Nottinghamshire was the ancient seat of the Byron family, but was sold by Lord Byron the poet, after vehement protestations that nothing should induce him to part with it

3 his Titan-agony, h . . . as it were, with the forces by which he felt . . . a struggle of passion against law, like the war of the Titans with the newer race of Gods Compare the lines in Arnold's *Memorial Verses*, where speaking of Byron he says

“ With shivering heart the strife we saw
Of passion with eternal law,
And yet with reverential awe
We watch'd the fount of fiery life
Which served for that Titanic strife ”

6. flicker'd the metaphor is from an expiring lamp.

WORLDLY PLACE

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, emperor from 161 to 180 A.D., a Stoic of singularly pure and bright character His *Meditations* are distinguished by fineness of moral perception and intense practical earnestness In many respects the philosophy of Matthew Arnold's poems is near akin to that of the *Meditations*, and here he takes a text from Marcus Aurelius and bases upon it one of his most characteristic maxims.

13 There were, &c ‘There would be’

14 Cp *Self-Dependence*, l 31 f .

“ Resolve to be thyself, and know that he,
Who finds himself, loses his misery ! ”

THE BETTER PART

1. boundless hopes, that is, the hopes of immortality and everlasting reward for well-doing

- 2 spurn'st, 'rejectest'; properly to 'spurn' is to kick against
 12 the inward judge, i.e. the consciousness of right and wrong
 in our own hearts

THE GOOD SHEPHERD WITH THE KID

Tertullian, moved by his intense feeling against the growing worldliness of the Church, became at last a Montanist, and, among other doctrines of that sect, proclaimed that sins committed after baptism could not be forgiven. The sect was founded by one Montanus, at Ardaban in Phrygia, and claimed to be guided by a new and special outpouring of the Spirit. The Montanists demanded a stricter standard of morality, more fasting, the prohibition of second marriages, and a complete separation of Christianity from the world. In particular, they would have excluded from the Church all who were guilty of mortal sin.

10 eye suffused, that is, with eyesight dimmed by rising tears

11 where she hid, etc. The Catacombs, originally formed as Christian burial-places, and not apparently with any intention of secrecy, did no doubt in many cases become a refuge for the members of the Church in times of persecution, and precautions were then taken to conceal the entrances to them and baffle the search of the pursuers.

13 The favourite form under which we find Christ represented in the Catacombs is that of the Good Shepherd, and it may be that the animal which he bears on his shoulders is in some cases more like a kid than a lamb.

MONICA'S LAST PRAYER

The reference here is to a passage of the *Confessions of St. Augustine*, which is sufficiently interesting to be worth quoting nearly in full, though it forms rather a long commentary for a sonnet.

Augustine relates how, when about to embark for Africa with his mother Monica, she was taken ill at Ostia, and there died. "She fell sick," he says, "of a fever, and in that sickness one day she fell into a swoon and was for a while withdrawn from these visible things. We hastened round her; but she was soon brought back to her senses, and looking on me and my brother standing by her, said to us enquiringly, 'Where was I?' And then looking fixedly on us with grief amazed, 'Hee,' saith she, 'shall you bury your mother?' I held my peace and refrained weeping; but my brother spake something,

wishing for her as the happier lot, that she might die not in a strange place, but in her own land. Whereat she with anxious look, checking him with her eyes, for that he still savoured such things, and then looking upon me, 'Behold,' saith she, 'what he saith!' and soon after to us both, 'Lay,' she saith, 'this body anywhere, let not the care for that any way disquiet you: this only I request, that you would remember me at the Lord's altar, wherever you be.'

"But I, considering Thy gifts, Thou unseen God, did rejoice and give thanks to Thee, recalling what I before knew, how careful and anxious she had ever been as to her place of burial, which she had provided and prepared for herself by the body of her husband. For because they had lived in great harmony together, she also wished to have this addition to her happiness, and to have it remembered among men, that after her pilgrimage beyond the seas, what was earthly of this united pair had been permitted to be united beneath the same earth. I heard afterwards also, that when we were now at Ostia, she one day discoursed with certain of my friends about the contempt of this life and the blessing of death; and when they asked whether she were not afraid to have her body so far from her own city, she replied, 'Nothing is fair to God, nor is it to be feared lest at the end of the world He should not recognise whence to raise me up'" (*Confessions of St Augustine*, ix. 11, quoted from the translation in the *Library of the Fathers*).

LYRIC POEMS

THE STRAYED REVELLER

An extract is here given from the lyric poem which gave its name to the first anonymous volume of Arnold's poems, published in 1849. The passage selected is admirable for the vivid picturesqueness of its descriptions. The 'Youth' of the poem, one of the rout of Bacchus, who has drunk of Circe's magic cup, tells Ulysses what he has learnt from Silenus, how the Gods behold with indifference all that passes on the earth, regarding it merely as a spectacle, while the bards to whom the Gods give vision, behold also, but are compelled to suffer with those whose labours they see. The poem is in a loose metre without rhyme and less regular than that of *Rugby Chapel*, *Heine's Grave*, etc. Here the verse has sometimes two accents and sometimes more, and the transition is at times rather sudden from a trochaic or dactylic measure to a regular iambic verse, e.g. ll. 33-52, 94-105, etc.

6 Tiresias the blind prophet of Thebes The Asopus is a river of Boeotia running at a distance of some few miles from Thebes

16 Pelion, a mountain in Thessaly supposed to be the abode of the Centaurs

34 on the wide stepp The description is apparently meant for the plains in the southern part of Russia, as they may once have been.

37 bread The Scythian, being a nomad, would hardly have bread, unless he found the corn growing wild

50 rain-blear'd, 'stained and blurred with rain'

54 Chorasman stream · that is the Oxus, flowing through the land of the people anciently called Chorasmians, into the Sea of Aral It is called 'clay-laden' because of its turbid, yellow waters There is a fine description of the Oxus in the concluding lines of *Sohrab and Rustum*

77. The Happy Islands, i.e. the Islands of the Blest, to which heroes pass after their toils in life are over

89 f His foreboding is of the fate of his country, and because of it he is scorned in his old age by those who have been formerly saved by his counsels

91 Hera's anger was because when appointed to arbitrate in a dispute between Zeus and Hera he decided in favour of Zeus In revenge for this Hera is said to have struck him with blindness but Zeus gave him the gift of prophecy and prolonged his life for seven generations

95 then they feel, etc It is said that at the marriage-feast of Peirithous, one of the Lapithæ, an intoxicated Centaur attempted to carry off the bride Hippodameia, and this led to the celebrated fight of the Centaurs and Lapithæ, in which the Centaurs were defeated and driven out of their land Theseus, the friend of Peirithous, fought on the side of the Lapithæ

102 Alcmena's dreadful son Heracles, whose fight with the Centaurs is sometimes brought into connection with that mentioned above.

108 ff their skiff, . Their melon-harvest. The bards identify themselves with the subjects of their song, sympathy is the law of their vision what the Indian, the Scythian, the merchants on the Oxus suffer, they too must suffer It is their boat which is nearly upset in the sudden squall, their melon-harvest which the worms have gnawn, their bodies which are parched by the frost on the bare steppe, their treasure which is carried away by robbers or extorted from them by greedy kings; and they must feel the past toils of the heroes before they can celebrate their rest.

128 *Seven-gated Thebes* that is, Thebes in Boeotia. In the war of the Seven against Thebes each gate is attacked by a several chief. The older Egyptian Thebes had a hundred gates.

130 *Argo* the ship in which the Argonauts sailed for the golden fleece

SELF-DECEPTION

With this poem should be compared that entitled *Revolutions*. Here the poet deals with the powers of the individual, and ends almost in despair of any real achievement, there with the race, and looking back acknowledges much already achieved in the past, while in the future God's perfect order may at last be attained. This poem, which was included in the volume of 1852, much resembles some of Schiller's in both rhythm and style. The idea is that we are blinded and deceived, supposing that we possess powers we do not possess, because gifts have been given to us not in full but as it were in mere shreds and fragments, so that we feel powers stirring within us of which after all we can make no real use.

12 Staved us back, 'kept us back as with a staff'

DOVER BEACH

A fine expression of the feeling that all is really vain that the world has to offer, that here we have neither joy nor peace, and yet that to be true in love to one another may be after all some help in the confusion and darkness. The subdued tones both of light and sound, which the poet prefers, are very noticeable here. The poem was published in 1867.

8 moon-blanch'd land Cp *Scholar-Gipsy*, l. 9,

"the strips of moon-blanch'd green,"

and *A Summer Night*, l. 1,

"In the deserted moon-blanch'd street"

15 *Sophocles long ago*, etc. The reference is probably to the chorus in the *Antigone* beginning *Εὐδαίμονες, οἷσι κακῶν*, and especially to ll. 583-588, where the evil coming upon a doomed house is compared to the gathering of a storm on the sea. "As the swelling wave, when driven by Thracian sea-blasts it rushes over the gloom which lies beneath the sea, rolls up the dark shingle from the depth, and the beach on which it breaks resounds with a stormy moan."

24 Compare *Obermann Once More*, where, speaking of early faith departing, he says

“ But slow that tide of common thought,
Which bathed our life, retired,
Slow, slow the old world wore to nought,
And pulse by pulse expired ”

THE LORD'S MESSENGERS

We must suppose that the messengers are those among men who seem specially to strive in the cause of righteousness and peace. Of these but few can feel that they have really accomplished the work which they had to do. Cp *Rugby Chapel*, 162 ff

15 as prisoners, draw breath, & e live, but in captivity to the powers of evil

16 ff are cross'd By a pitiless arrow of Death that is, an arrow of Death crosses their path and strikes them

THE YOUTH OF NATURE

This poem, first published in 1852, has reference especially to the death of Wordsworth. The poet and priest of Nature is dead, yet Nature herself is as lovely and fresh as of old, and our mourning and the darkening of our eyes is rebuked by the voice of Nature herself, who reminds us that the singer is less than his themes, and that though man, race after race, may pretend to read her secret, yet the gleam of her skies, the moan of her seas and the voice of her hills is still unuttered.

With the references to Wordsworth may be compared the *Memorial Verses* on the death of Wordsworth, among the elegiac poems of Arnold.

“ He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth,
Smiles broke from us and we had ease,
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o'er the sun-lit fields again,
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain
Our youth returned, for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead,
Spirits dried up and closely furl'd,
The freshness of the early world.

.

Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,
 O Rotha, with thy living wave !
 Sing him thy best ! for few or none
 Heirs thy voice right, now he is gone "

2 The lake might be either Rydal Water or Grasmere, but more probably the former, because Grasmere with the grave of Wordsworth is in the shadow, while the lake here is in full moonlight.

4 sheen, 'brightness,' used especially of a smooth glistening surface

8 **Rydal and Fairfield.** Fairfield is a large grassy mountain about 2800 feet high, which lies in a kind of horse-shoe curve on the north side of Rydal Water. 'Rydal' here is, no doubt, Rydal Fell, a part of Fairfield, not the lake. Wordsworth lived at Rydal Mount just above the lake, and is buried at Grasmere, within a short distance.

15 **The Pillar** is a remarkable isolated rock, which rises on the flank of the mountain called from it Pillar Mountain, on the south side of Ennerdale in Cumberland. The poem by Wordsworth called *The Brothers* has its scene laid in Ennerdale, and its story is connected with the Pillar rock.

" You see yon precipice,—it wears the shape
 Of a vast building made of many crags,
 And in the midst is one particular rock,
 That rises like a column from the vale,
 Whence by our shepherds it is called *The Pillar*.

Wordsworth, *The Brothers*

17. **Egremont** a village near the sea coast to the west of the Lake country, situated on the stream which flows down from Ennerdale. Wordsworth wrote a poem, called *The Horn of Egremont Castle*, on a tradition connected with the Lucie family, who had their residence there, but the reference here is probably still to *The Brothers*, where Egremont is mentioned more than once.

18 **The gleam of The Evening Star.** The allusion is to Wordsworth's poem of *Michael*, where the shepherd's cottage is described as placed on rising ground near Grasmere, whence it could be seen from the village and the neighbouring dales.

" And from this constant light, so regular
 And so far seen, the house itself, by all
 Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
 Both old and young, was named *The Evening Star* "

The sheepfold is that which Michael worked at building during his son's absence, "and left unfinished when he died." The poem ends thus.

" The cottage which was named *The Evening Star*
 Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground

On which it stood ; great changes have been wrought
 In all the *oaks* *that* *grew* *in* *the* *place* *—* yet the oak is left
 That grew *in* *the* *place* *—* and the remains
 Of the unfinished sheep-fold may be seen
 Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll "

23 the Quantock coombs Here the reference is to the poem of *Ruth* Ruth in her madness came, we are told, to the banks of the Tone near the Quantock Hills in Somersetshire, and there dwelt in the woods,

" Setting her little water-mills
 By spouts and fountains wild,"

and cheering her loneliness with a flute made of a hemlock stalk 'Coombs' are small valleys running up into the hills The word is Celtic, and is used in the West of England and in Wales

28 ff Wordsworth was born in 1770, and died in 1850. In his youth he had been carried away by the enthusiasm for liberty and fraternity which expressed itself in the earlier movement of the French Revolution Then by the later excesses, and by the military despotism which sprang from it, he was led to change his opinions about government, and to become politically a 'Conservative' During the last twenty years of his life he saw the "dissolving throes" of the social order which existed in England in his youth, in the movements which led to the Reform Act, the Repeal of the Corn Laws, and many other Liberal measures

31 dissolving throes The word 'throes' means properly 'pangs' or 'sufferings,' but it has come to be associated usually with the pangs of birth, so that it here suggests the idea of the dissolution of one social order in giving birth to another

34 the Theban seer, *i.e.* Tiresias, the blind prophet, who, having assisted the Thebans by his counsel for several generations, was at length captured with his native city by the sons of the seven chiefs who had formerly been repulsed from Thebes, and drinking of the spring of Tilphusa as he was led away, sank down and died

37. Copais is an extensive lake ten miles to the north-west of Thebes The range of Helicon lies to the south of the lake, and Parnassus is fifteen or twenty miles to the westward, rising to a height of about 8000 feet

54 the wonder and bloom of the world that is, the freshness and beauty of Nature, which he caused men to see with his eyes and to rejoice in

56. the fruit-bearing day of his race that is, the age which produced the great race of poets of the early years of the present century, among whom Wordsworth, Byron and Shelley were the three most illustrious.

72 'Like stars which can be seen only through the telescope of the astronomer, and by most of us are undiscerned'

77. the Mighty Mother Rhea or Cybele, closely connected with the Earth Goddess, and representing the productive powers of Nature

103 ff 'Man knows not and cannot express the mysteries of his own being how then can he know and express those of Nature?'

PALLADIUM

This poem was published in 1867 The Palladium was an image or symbol of Pallas kept in a temple at Troy, on which the safety of the city was supposed to depend Odysseus and Diomedes undertook to carry it off, and by the connivance of the priest they succeeded

1 Simois was one of the rivers which ran through the plains of Troy, the other being Xanthus or Scamander, mentioned in l 14

3 Ilium was the citadel, or, as here, the city, of Troy. Hector is taken as the highest embodiment of the fighting power of Troy

5 ff The peaceful rain of the sunlight and the moonlight on the columns of the temple, standing far away in its sequestered glen, is contrasted with the violence of the waves of fight below

18 blind hopes and blind despairs because both hopes and despairs refer to objects which are not in truth the highest, though to us they seem so

22 a ruling effluence 'Effluence' is properly that which flows from something here, as qualified by 'ruling,' it combines this idea with that of 'influence,' that which flows upon something and exercises power over it

The high ideal must not altogether be lost, though it may be forgotten for a time If it fails altogether, our life will necessarily be fruitless of all real good Compare with this poem that which is called *Morality*

REVOLUTIONS

Compare with this the poem called *Self-Deception* There the gifts of the individual are represented as so imperfect that it is doubtful whether any good can be attained here, since the race is in view rather than the individual, and since the defects of

one man are to some extent supplied by others, there is more hope of the ultimate attainment of the end. The poem was first published in 1852.

8 something was made. The word 'Greece' may be taken to represent the highest development of plastic art and of literary form, 'Rome' that of law and government, 'England' of political freedom firmly based, 'France' of universal ideas of equality and fraternity.

SELF-DEPENDENCE.

The idea of the permanence and calm of nature as opposed to the restless fever of human life is one which appears constantly in Arnold's poems. Compare the opening sonnet *Quiet Work, The Youth of Nature, Lines Written in Kensington Gardens*, and *Thyrsis*. This poem was published in the volume of 1852.

31 f. Compare *Empedocles on Ætna*.

"Once read thy own breast right,
And thou hast done with fears."

MORALITY.

This poem was first published in 1852. Compare with it the poem called *Palladium*.

1 ff. The true value and meaning of the daily routine of duty has never been better expressed than in this opening stanza. We cannot always stir up enthusiasm, our hearts will at times be hard and dry, and love may fail, but the resolves which have been made in moments of spiritual fire and insight can be kept when darkness and coldness have gathered round us, at times when we scarcely know to what our work is tending.

13 when the clouds are off the soul that is, in those moments of brightness,

"When love is an unerring light
And joy its own security."

Wordsworth, *Ode to Duty*.

Nature herself then guides us to that which is highest, and struggles are no longer needed.

19. whose censure thou dost dread, because of the contrast between the human struggle to fulfil a task and the free cheerful air with which Nature performs her work.

24 ff. Compare the sonnet *In Harmony with Nature*.

"Know, man hath all that Nature hath and more,
And in that more lie all his hopes of good."

31. gauge, 'measure' Nature was not yet confined by the measurement imposed upon her by time or the limits laid down for her by space

LINES WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS.

This poem was first published in 1852, and then not until 1867.

1 A 'glade' is an open space in a wood. The word is connected with 'glad,' meaning properly, 'bright.'

4. black-crown'd, because of the mass of dark foliage at the top.

red-boled, *i.e.* with red trunks, such as large pine-trees often have 'Bole' means 'trunk' or 'stem,' from its roundness

6. girdling, 'surrounding.'

8. Observe the expressive rhythm of the line

24 Pan was the god of the country and of flocks

25. on men's impious uproar hurl'd, *i.e.* when compelled to be with those whose life is a turmoil of unholy contention.

28. keeps, 'dwells.'

39. a peace of thine This is not, of course, the peace of the rural quietness, for that can be marred by man at any moment, but the inner peace of the soul amid outward strife, of which the peacefulness of this glade in the midst of the city's uproar is a type.

CADMUS AND HARMONIA

This is from the dramatic poem *Empedocles on Etna*, published in 1852, but almost at once withdrawn, and not republished until 1867. The author in fact was dissatisfied with it, not, as he takes care to explain, because it deals with a classical subject, but because being in dramatic form it ought, he conceived, to have dramatic action. It is, however, in itself a fine poem and well deserved to be republished. The author himself chose this lyric and the *Apollo Musagetes*, which follows, for separate publication.

Zeus is said to have given Harmonia to Cadmus, founder of Thebes, as his wife, and all the gods were present at the marriage. When Cadmus at length resigned the government of Thebes, he went to Illyria, and finally he and Harmonia were changed by the gods into serpents. The calamities of Thebes

were a favourite subject of Greek drama, so that Milton, enumerating the subjects of tragedy, speaks of it as

“ Presenting Thebes, or Pelops’ line,
Or the tale of Troy divine ”

- 14 Where the Sphinx lived that is, on a rock near Thebes
16 the Ismenus is the little river on which Thebes stands

APOLLO MUSAGETES

This lyric, like the preceding, is from *Empedocles on Etna*, of which it is the conclusion ‘Apollo Musagetes’ is ‘Apollo, leader of the Muses,’ a character in which we sometimes find him represented in Greek statues, with a long flowing robe and playing with both hands upon the lyre suspended from his neck.

5 Not here The scene changes from Etna to Helicon, and so continues to the end

7. Helicon is a mountain in the south of Bœotia, sacred to Apollo and the Muses Thisbe was a small town in the valley on the southern side The ridge runs down at its western extremity to the Corinthian Gulf. Note the punctuation of these lines.

30 the Nine, i.e. the Muses

38. In the spring The founts of Hippocrene,
on the slopes of Helicon, &c.

47 f Note the antithesis between ‘rest’ and ‘action’

50 the palm, that is, the reward of strife, the palm as emblem of victory

ELEGIAC POEMS.

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY.

This poem was first published in 1853 The subject was suggested by a passage in Glanvil’s *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, a small octavo, dated 1661, which is quoted in a shortened form by the author in his notes This passage it is worth while to give in full

Glanvil is setting forth the idea that one man might be able to determine the thoughts of another by the power of the Imagination Thus, he says, “will be reckon’d in the first rank of Impossibles yet by the power of advanc’d Imagination it may very probably be effected, and story abounds with instances It troubles the reader but with one; and the hands from which I had it make me secure of the truth on’t There was

very lately a Lad in the University of Oxford, who being of very pregnant and ready parts, and yet wanting the encouragement of preferment, was by his poverty forc'd to leave his studies there and to cast himself upon the wide world for a lively-hood. Now his necessities growing dayly on him, and wanting the help of friends to relieve him, he was at last forced to joyn himself to a company of Vagabond Gypsies, whom occasionally he met with, and to follow their Trade for a maintenance. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtilty of his carriage he quickly got so much of their love and esteem, as that they discover'd to him their Mystery; in the practice of which, by the pregnancy of his wit and parts, he soon grew so good a proficient as to be able to out-do his Instructours. After he had been a pretty while well instructed in the Trade, there chanc'd to ride by a couple of Scholars, who had formerly bin of his acquaintance. The Scholars had quickly spied out their old friend among the Gypsies, and then they prevent'd their owning him before that Crew and taking one of them aside privately, desired him with his friend to go to an Inn not far distant thence, promising there to come to them. They accordingly went thither, and he follows. After their first salutations his friends enquire how he came to lead so odd a life as that was, and to joyn himself with such a crew. The Scholar-Gypsy, having given them a short history of his life, which drove him to that kind of life, told them that the people he went with were not such Impostours as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of Imagination, and that himself had learnt much of their Art, and improved it further then themselves could. And to evince the truth of what he told them, he said he'd remove into another room, leaving them to discourse together, and upon his return tell them the sum of what they had talked of, which accordingly he perform'd, giving them a full account of what had pass'd between them in his absence. The Scholars being amaz'd at so unexpected a discovery, earnestly desir'd him to unriddle the mystery. In which he gave them satisfaction by telling them that what he did was by the power of Phancy binding theirs, and that himself had the discourse they held together, while he was from them that there were warrantable wayes of heightening the Imagination to that pitch as to bind anothers, and that when he had compass'd the whole secret, some parts of which he said he was yet ignorant of, he intended to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned" (pp 196-198).

Arnold very naturally shrank from inflicting so long a citation upon his readers of 1853, but the passage as now given at length is both interesting in itself and adds points of illustration for

the poem. We see on the one hand the original of the 'pregnant parts' of l 34, of the suggestion about 'preferment' in l 35, and above all of the title of the piece, *The Scholar-Gypsy*. On the other hand we find that the 'heaven-sent moment' which was to be awaited, the 'spark from heaven' which should at some time fall, and the supposed popular legend that the lost scholar still strayed about the fields and hills near Oxford, are all due to the poet, whose imagination has greatly improved upon Glanvil's hint. Before leaving Glanvil we may observe that he was perhaps congenial to Matthew Arnold's mood because of his tendency to look beyond the vulgar controversies of his day and to seek for sources of illumination from new quarters. In his book on the 'Picexistence of Souls' called *Lux Orientalis*, published 1662, he says (p 34) "And since our enquiries are benighted in the West, let us look towards the East, from whence 'tis likely the desired light may display itself and chase away the darknesse that covers the face of those theories."

✓ This poem and the succeeding one are in the form of pastoral elegies localized in the country to the west of Oxford. By virtue of them Matthew Arnold may claim to have done on a small scale for this little piece of English rural scenery something like that which Wordsworth did for the Lake country. He has "lent a new life to these hills," and has made Cunner and Wychwood, Hinksey and Bagley Wood, Godstow and Bablock Hythe the classic names even for those to whom Oxford and its country are unknown, while for successive generations of Oxford men Matthew Arnold's two pastorals have been first a revelation of rural beauty and charm which they might otherwise have passed by unnoticed, and afterwards a treasury of picturesque and poetical memories. Hardly any other locality indeed could have awakened the same kind of interest.

It is true that in the hands of Arnold the pastoral elegy is not a mere idyll. The form is adopted not merely because it is picturesque, but as the most effective means of expressing the thought. Yet we must remember that with Arnold the influence of locality is always strong; whether it be Switzerland or London, the Lake country or Oxford, impressions of place have always much to do with his methods of poetical conception. In this case the tranquillity of the rural life and the comparative permanence of its features as compared with those of "each spot man makes or fills," is a guarantee to him that the clear aim and the unconquerable hope of his Scholar-Gypsy still live in the world, and the peacefulness of these loved hills is contrasted with the feverish life from which not even "that sweet city with her dreaming spires" is altogether free, the life of turmoil and controversy, of knocking at preferment's door, successfully or in vain, of half-beliefs and casual creeds, of vague resolves never fulfilled, of insight which has never borne fruit in

deeds To those who object to the artificiality of pastoral poetry it may fairly be replied that in the *Scholar-Gipsy* at least there is little or nothing of this fault. The shepherd is a real shepherd and does nothing that a shepherd ought not to do, and the landscape is used truthfully and beautifully as a setting for the reflections.

The ten-line stanza of these two poems is an unusual one. It consists of a sextett rhyming *a b c b c a*, the last line being shorter than the rest by two accents, and a quatrain rhyming *d e e d*.

2 the wattled cotes the sheep-cotes made of hurdles of osiers interwoven, within which the sheep are confined during a part of the day and then let out into the pasture. The scene is not indicated precisely, but it is on one of the tracts of rising ground about Oxford, probably some part of the 'Cummer range'.

3 wistful, 'eager,' originally a variation of 'wishful'

4 rack, 'strain' (with shouting)

10 the quest that is the search after the 'Scholar-Gipsy,' who was said by popular rumour still to haunt these hills and fields ep ll. 62 f

"And I myself seem half to know thy looks

And put the shepherds, wanderer' on thy trace"

21 o'er the high, half-reap'd field, that is, lying above it, in the topmost corner of a sloping cornfield

31 Glanvil's book See the introduction to this poem.

34 pregnant parts a phrase from Glanvil, "being of very pregnant and ready parts." The epithet 'pregnant' points to something original and productive in his abilities.

35 knocking at preferment's door that is, endeavouring to win promotion, a fellowship or a living, by his talents

50. heaven-sent moments in the original edition 'happy moments'

53 ff. With this description of the Scholar-Gipsy and his haunts may be compared that of the pensive student of Nature in Gray's *Elegy*, of which perhaps Arnold was thinking when he conceived himself as making inquiry of the shepherds after his Scholar.

"If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate—

"Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn

“ There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch
And pore upon the brook that babbles by

“ One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath and near his favourite tree,” etc.

57 the Hurst that is Cumner (or Chawley) Hurst, a conspicuous eminence crowned with trees, an elm and seven firs (there were once more), which forms the northern part of the low range called in l 69 “the Cumner hills,” running southwards from somewhere about the hamlet of Botley to the end of Boars Hill, at a distance of about two miles to the south-west of Oxford

58 the Berkshire moors are, it may be supposed, simply the Berkshire downs, the only ground that can be called ‘moor’ in a strict sense lies on the slopes of the hills above mentioned, which are indeed in Berkshire, but hardly secluded enough to suit the present passage

59 ingle-bench, the seat by the fire-side The word ‘ingle’ is Celtic (perhaps borrowed from Latin *ignaculus*) and means fire, so the ‘ingle-nook’ is the chimney-corner

69 green-muffled that is, enveloped in green foliage

74 Bab-lock-lithe, a ferry over the Thames, some five or six miles from Oxford, by which riders who had gone out by the Witney Road, crossing the bridge near Ensham, might return by another way, making a circuit of about sixteen miles There is no bridge over the river between Newbridge and Swinford bridge near Ensham, a distance of nearly seven miles

76 chops round in the first edition, “swings round” The meaning is the same, the idea being that the punt makes a bend down the stream as it crosses, and is pulled round in a curve by the loose rope attached to it. The expression ‘chop round’ is used especially of the wind changing its direction, or of vessels turning with wind, to ‘chop’ is properly to change

79 shy, that is, ‘retired’, so in l 70

Wychwood bowers originally “woodland bowers” The substitution is a very happy one, giving definiteness to the description and introducing a name - In l 111 the word “Wychwood” is used, which is about ten miles from Oxford

83 the Fyfield elm This is an elm tree, which stands not exactly at Fyfield, but at the hamlet of Tubney, on a piece of turf by the roadside, just where the roads from Oxford and from Abingdon join It was once remarkable for its vast size, and was a landmark for all the countryside; but some five years ago, the branches having begun to break off, it was judged to be

91 **Godstow Bridge**, over the Thames between Wolvercote and Wytham, about two miles above Oxford, near the ruins of Godstow Nunnery.

"And watch'd the sun blaze on the turning scythe"

111 Bagley Wood, a picturesque piece of forest-ground about two miles to the south of Oxford, through which runs the Abingdon road. The gipsies would not be allowed to enter the wood itself, which is closed, but might pitch their tents on the turf by the side of the road which runs through it.

120 waiting, that is, for one of those heaven-sent moments
which are needed for his skill, cp 1 50

147 with bliss and teen, 'with joy and sorrow'

157 The singleness and simplicity of the aim convinces us that it will live on, and not perish like our feverish schemes; and as Glanvil might have said, the soul of such a one, if its bodily tenement perishes, will find and inform some other suitable body, through which it may continue its activity.

165 'Which to have tried many things and to have been disappointed in many things brings with it,' that is, 'which is caused by many failures'

167 term or scope, that is, fixed limit or aim of our movement. 'Scope' means properly a mark aimed at

172 casual creeds, systems of belief or ways of viewing things which have come, as it were, by chance, and are not rooted in any vital conviction

182 amongst us one, Who most has suffer'd The passage is expressed so as to suggest that the poet is thinking of some particular person, especially in the first edition, where 'One' is printed with a capital letter, and yet it is difficult to conjecture who the person could be. Tennyson had lately published *In Memoriam*, but probably Arnold would not have spoken so of him. Neither Goethe nor Wordsworth answer to the description, they represent the comparative sanity of an earlier generation

190 anodynes that is, devices for relieving the pain of his spiritual disease

193 waive, 'resign'

194 close lipp'd, pressing the lips closely together, that no hasty word may escape them

205 palsied hearts because, not having any vital belief or fixed aim, the spirit is paralyzed and unable to achieve anything

208 Averse, as Dido did, etc. The reference is to the passage of the *Aeneid* where Dido, having slain herself because she had been deserted by Eneas, is addressed by her 'false friend' in the underworld, but turns away from him in silence.

"Illa solo fixos oculos aversa tenebat,
Nec magis incepto voltum sermone movetur,
Quam si dura silex aut stet Marpesia cantes
Tandem corripuit sese, atque inimica refugit
In nemus umbriferum." *Aen* vi 469 ff

212 'Clinging to the dark recesses which are a security against outward disturbance.'

220 dingle means properly 'a dark place', hence a deep shady valley

232 ff As some grave Tyrian trader, etc. The simile gives with admirable picturesqueness the contrast between the man of antique simplicity and the versatile schemer of modern life, with his single and divided purpose. The grave Phœnician carries out beyond the western straits to the Atlantic his corded bales of substantial merchandise, while the merry Grecian coaster passes only from isle to isle of the Egean with perishable cargo of ripe fruit, fish, and wine, pleasing to the palate indeed, but not of enduring value

234 the cool-hair'd creepers, hanging over the mouth of some sea cave or hidden creek, where the little vessel, which can only sail by day, has been laid up till sunrise

244 Midland, i.e. Mediterranean, so Wordsworth speaks of "Parthenope upon the Midland sea"

245 the Syrtes, two sandbanks off the coast of Africa to the south of Sicily

247 unbent sails that is, unbound the cords which held the sails extended, and furled them

248 cloudy, because veiled in the misty spray of the breakers.

249. Iberians, a general name for the ancient Spaniards

THYRSIS

This poem, written to commemorate the author's friend, Arthur Hugh Clough, who died at Florence, 1861, is in the same stanza as the preceding one, and still more definitely pastoral in form. A note by the author indicates that it was meant as a companion poem to *The Scholar-Gipsy*, to which there is reference throughout. It was published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, April, 1866, and then in the volume of *New Poems*, 1867.

With characteristic self-restraint the author says little of his own feelings of sorrow, and falls very happily into that vein of pensive reflection which suited him best. In fact, his aim is not so much to commemorate his friend's highest gifts as to connect him with certain places and to record certain associations. This is clear from a letter of the author to Prof. Sharp, April 13, 1866. "*Thyrsis* is a very quiet poem, but, I think, solid and sincere. It had long been in my mind to connect Clough with that Cumner country, and when I began, I was carried irresistibly into this form. You say truly enough that there is much in Clough (the whole prophet side, in fact) which one cannot deal with in this way, and one has the feeling, if one reads the poem as a memorial poem, that not enough is said about Clough in it. I feel this so much that I do not send the poem to Mrs. Clough. Still Clough had this idyllic side too to deal with this suited my desire to deal again with that Cumner country. Anyway only so could I treat the matter this time *Valeat quantum*." To his mother he had written on April 7 "Tell [Edward] that the diction of the poem was modelled on that of Theocritus, whom I have been much reading during the two years this poem has been forming itself, and that I meant the diction to be so artless as to be almost heedless. The images are all from actual observation, on which point there

is an excellent remark in Wordsworth's notes collected by Miss Fenwick. Edward has, I think, fixed on the two stanzas I myself like best in 'O easy access' and 'And long the way appears' I also like 'Where is the girl,' and the stanzas before it, but that is because they bring certain places and moments before me. It is probably too quiet a poem for the general taste, but I think it will stand wear."

The quietness of the poem is, in fact, its greatest charm. It is not in the least like the other great poems which have been written in the present century to commemorate dead friends, e.g. *In Memoriam* or *Adonais*, though the latter of these is drawn to some extent from the same sources, Theocritus and Moschus. *Thyrsis* is rather a descendant of *Lycidas* through Gray's *Elegy*. Though the diction, no doubt, was modelled upon that of Greek pastoral poetry, there is only one passage, I think, which can be definitely marked down as imitated, and that is the two stanzas ll 81-100, where reference is made to the lament for Bion.

Not much need here be said about Clough. He was a man of singular gifts and great fascination of character, a few years older than Arnold, whose friendship with him must have been chiefly at Oxford between 1845 (when Arnold was elected a Fellow of Oriel) and 1848 (when Clough resigned his tutorship of Oriel and left Oxford). He had been one of Dr Arnold's favourite pupils at Rugby, and many at Oxford were found to say that they owed more to him than to any other man. Such a poem as the *Boothe of Tober-na-Vuolich* shows the idyllic side of his nature, of which Matthew Arnold speaks, and this came immediately after his farewell to Oxford. *Thyrsis* in this poem stands for Clough, and *Corydon* for the author, names borrowed from Theocritus, or rather from Virgil, in whose seventh *Eclogue* they occur as the names of two rivals in a singing-match.

"Ambo florentes ætate, Arcades ambo,
Et cantare pares, et respondere parati."

It is more necessary perhaps to speak of the localities with which Arnold connects his friend. Already something has been said of them in the notes on the preceding poem, but here the references are more definite, and it is more essential that they should be clearly understood. Any map will show the bend northwards of the River Thames, and then its turn to the south, shortly before reaching Oxford. This loop is caused by the intervention of a line of low hills running nearly north and south for a distance of about six miles, the most northerly part, round which the river makes its bend, being the beautifully wooded hill of Wytham (pronounced 'White-ham'), to the south of which, after sinking almost to the level of the plain, the ground rises again to the heights of Cumner Hurst and Boars

Hill, whence it slopes down again towards Abingdon. This is the 'Cumner range' to which Arnold refers, hills never quite rising to a height of 550 feet above the sea (that is, 350 feet above Oxford), and cultivated up to the summit of the ridge, where however a yellow sandstone crops up, and much of the ground lies waste, covered with gorse and heather with copses interspersed. The top of Boars Hill, from which there are fine views of the river valley on both sides and of the Berkshire downs to the south, is a favourite object of walks from Oxford, but not only has the 'ploughboy's team' gone down many a bank which was green in the days of Arnold and Clough, but much of the hill has now been built over, having been found a healthful resort by jaded Oxford tutors.

1 **How changed is here, etc.** The keynote is struck at once by this reference to the restless movement of human things as compared with the peace and permanence of the fields and hills. So in the last lines of the poem the proof that "the light we sought is shining still" is found in the fact that the place is still the same, "Our tree yet crowns the hill."

2 **the two Hinkseys.** Just below the ridge described above lie the two little villages of North and South Hinksey, the former approached by the wooden bridge and causeway spoken of in *The Scholar-Gipsy*, ll 121-123. From both villages paths ascend the hill, but that which is especially spoken of here is South Hinksey, as we see from the next stanza.

11 **Childsworth Farm.** The path is that which leads up the hill from South Hinksey; the farm, which lies about half-way up, is more properly called Childswell (or Chilswell) farm. It is at the bottom of the large field which is now used as a golf-ground.

14 **The signal elm, etc.** This famous tree has often been identified with one of remarkable shape which stands at the top of the field above mentioned, about a hundred yards to the left of the path, and is certainly a very conspicuous object from the Oxford side of the hill. This tree is not an elm but an oak, though, as it looks more like an elm than an oak could reasonably be expected to do, this objection is perhaps not fatal. The conclusive argument against it is the fact that it is decidedly on the Oxford side of the ridge, and consequently does not command the view which is here spoken of: perhaps it may have a side glimpse of Ilsley Downs, but of the "Vale" and the "three lone weirs" it can see nothing. Moreover, no one coming up the track by Childswell farm could fail to see this tree quite early in the ascent, and one who had reached the upland by this path would necessarily be brought close to it, whereas we see from ll. 22 ff. that it was not seen until the upland was reached, and from l. 165 that when discovered it was at a distance. It is clear

that the tree must have been on the south-west part of the hill, for it looks on Ilsley Downs, which are nearly due south, the Vale, that is the Vale of the White Horse, which is south-west, and the 'youthful Thames' with its three lone weirs, to the west. There is no elm quite at the summit of the ridge which answers to the description, but there is one a few feet below it which commands exactly the view described, and is a magnificent tree, very conspicuous from the valley on that side of the hill. This tree is by the path which comes up from the village, but it is not necessary, however, to insist on a particular existing tree, the tree may be imaginary, though the other localities are real. This, indeed, would be rather characteristic, for the author sometimes mixes up fact and fancy in a rather puzzling way, of which a good example is afforded in *The Church of Bion*.

15. the three lone weirs probably the three immediately above Bablock Hythe, the Ark, Hart's, and Langley's. The Thames here, above the junction of the Evenlode and the Cherwell, is naturally much smaller than it is below Oxford.

16. Note that the scene of this poem is laid in winter, whereas that of *The Scholar-Gipsy* is at harvest time.

36. this many a year My pipe is lost. Matthew Arnold had published no volume of verse since 1857.

44. Iour'd, 'frown'd'. The word is pronounced here as a dissyllable, so 'fire' and other such words are usually dissyllables in Arnold's verse. On the other hand 'mowers' in l. 127 counts as one syllable only.

46. Some life of men 'unblest, etc. Shortly before leaving Oxford Clough had been much affected by the sufferings of the people in Ireland at the time of the potato famine; but it seems likely that his resignation of tutorship and fellowship was connected more with religious than with social questions.

51. So, some tempestuous morn, etc. Arnold says in a letter to his mother (April 7, 1866), "The cuckoo on the wet June morning I heard in the garden at Woodford, and all those three stanzas you like are reminiscences of Woodford."

57. So have I heard, etc. The cuckoo changes his note in June, and this may perhaps be regarded as his parting cry, but he does not actually depart till a month later.

62 ff. The rich peacefulness of this stanza should be noted, in contrast with the unquiet storminess of the preceding one.

72 ff. The idea of this stanza was no doubt partly suggested by the well-known lines from the *Lament for Bion*, commonly ascribed to Moschus, which begin *αἰαὶ ταὶ μαλάχαι μὲν ἐπὶ τὰ καίρον ὀλῶνται*. 'Alas, when the mallows perish in the garden, or the pale-green parsley, or the curling anise, they live again

and grow up in another year But we men, the great, the strong, the wise, when once we are dead, sleep in silence within the hollow earth, a long, unending, unawakening sleep'

74. **uncrumpling** that is, opening out its curled and crumpled fronds The expression seems to be suggested by the *εὐθαλές οὖλον ἀνηθον* of the Greek lines referred to above, where *οὖλον* means curled or crumpled

78 f Clough's poems were not much to Arnold's taste; no doubt he thought them too unpolished nor were they much known beyond a limited circle of friends

82 **But when Sicilian shepherds, etc** The two stanzas which follow are suggested by ll 121-133 of the *Lament for Bion* Bion and Moschus were Sicilian pastoral poets, younger contemporaries of Theocritus. The passage referred to begins,

ἐγὼ δ' ἐπὶ πένθει τῶδε
δακρυχέων τὸν ὄτον ὁδύρομαι.

It may be thus translated. 'And I for this sorrow lament, shedding tears for thy fate and if I might, even as Orpheus went down to Tartarus, as once Odysseus, as Alcides in former time, I too would have gone to the house of Pluto, that I might see thee, and if thou shouldst sing any song to Pluto, that I might hear what thou singest Yet to Proserpine do thou play something, and sing some sweet pastoral strain she too is Sicilian, and she played once in the valleys of Enna, and she knows the Dorian lay not unrewarded shall be thy singing; and as to Orpheus once she gave back Eurydice for his sweet harping, so she shall send thee, Bion, back to the hills And if I too had skill in piping, I myself would make music before Pluto'

85 **the unpermitted ferry's flow** that is, the ferry over which no living soul is permitted to pass.

92. **Dorian**. that is, Sicilian Theocritus and his school of pastoral poets wrote in the Doric dialect

95. **Enna** the place whence Proserpine, according to the myth, was carried off by Pluto

106. **the Fyfield tree**. See note on *The Scholar-Gipsy*, l 83.

107 ff The meadows by the river both above and below Oxford produce abundance of fritillaries in spring Ensham is about five miles above Oxford, just on the other side of Wytham Hill, and Sandford about four miles below the city

122. **Above the locks, etc** These must be the lock near Godstow Bridge and that at King's Weir about a mile above it "Wytham flats" would be the meadows between Wytham and the river

126 the shy Thames shore, because the banks of the river are hardly distinguished among the meadows until one comes close to them

131 the night The expression is here metaphorical, referring to the sense of advancing age, yet, as if in harmony with this, the night is actually closing in upon the hills, as we see from ll 161 ff So in harmony with the next stanza, "And long the way appears," we find that the 'signal-elm,' the object of the quest, when at length it is found, is too far off to be reached before dark

133 I see her veil, etc So in Collins' *Ode to Evening*

"And marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil"

But here it is the evening of life that is referred to

135 sprent, 'sprinkled'

149 the charm of thy repose, that is, of the repose which thou art now enjoying The poet, wearied by the earthly turmoil, is inclined to envy his friend who reposed from it, therefore evidently there can be no very passionate sorrow for his fate

167 Arno-vale Florence is in the valley of the Arno, and here Clough died and was buried

175. boon, 'pleasant,' 'good'

177 the great Mother This name belongs in mythology to the Mother of the Gods, Rhea or Cybele, but she is so closely connected with Demeter, Mother Earth, and with the productive powers of the earth generally, that we may here suppose the poet to mean some personification of Nature In *Westminster Abbey* the Mighty Mother is clearly Demeter

182 ff The author's note on this stanza is as follows "Daphnis, the ideal Sicilian shepherd of Greek pastoral poetry, was said to have followed into Phrygia his mistress Piplea, who had been carried off by robbers, and to have found her in the power of the king of Phrygia, Lityerses Lityerses used to make strangers try a contest with him in reaping corn, and to put them to death if he overcame them Hercules arrived in time to save Daphnis, took upon him the reaping contest with Lityerses, overcame him, and slew him The Lityerses-song connected with this tradition was, like the Lannus-song, one of the early plaintive strains of Greek popular poetry, and used to be sung by corn-reapers Other traditions represented Daphnis as beloved by a nymph, who exacted from him an oath to love no one else He fell in love with a princess, and was struck blind by the jealous nymph Mercury, who was his father, raised him to Heaven, and made a fountain spring up in the place from which

he ascended At this fountain the Sicilians offered yearly sacrifices " There is a so-called Lityerses-song in one of the *Idylls* of Theocritus, but it is only an ordinary reaping-song, with no mention of the Lityerses legend

216 f See note on *The Scholar-Gipsy*, l 57

223 learnt a stormy note, etc The reference is chiefly, perhaps, to Clough's poem of *Dipsychus*, while the "happy country tone" of the preceding line is suggested by the *Bohne of Tober-na-Vuolich*.

226 thou wast mute In the latter years of his life, Clough produced poetry only in times of enforced leisure, as when he was travelling for his health The last year of his life was spent abroad, in the south of France and in Italy, and to this apparently the last lines of the stanza refer

234 Compare *Lines written in Kensington Gardens*, 25 ff. There the soul which is disposed to think that there is no peace on earth, is reminded by the peace of nature, even amid the city's jar, that there is a calm which may be attained by resignation and by sympathy. here the spirit which faints with fatigue and fear, is spurred on by the assurance derived from the permanence of things in nature, of fields, of trees and of hills, that there is still an object which may be attained by exertion, and which it cannot choose but seek, even though beyond the grave all may be dark

The stress laid here on the continued existence of the tree is rather in favour of the supposition that it is an unimaginary one To stake so much upon the survival of an actual individual tree would perhaps have been too reckless

STANZAS FROM CARNAC

Carnac is in the south of Brittany, overlooking the peninsula and bay of Quiberon It is celebrated for its vast array of Druidic stones, arrayed in lines on a wide heath The approach is marked by a prominent cairn, called the Tombelle de Saint-Michel, from the chapel surmounting it This is a cone of loose stones at the eastern extremity of the Carnac stones, and it is this that is referred to in the first stanza This poem was first published in the volume of 1867

1. knoll, 'hillock' originally a Celtic word, and so all the more appropriate here, in connection with the great Celtic monument

5. weird, 'mysterious' The word means, properly, 'fatal,' that is, 'having to do with destiny,' from the old English *wyrde*, 'destiny,' connected with the German *werden*, 'to become' See

the passage quoted in the note to *Balder Dead*, Pt 1, l 93. From the mysterious character of destiny is derived the modern meaning of the word, denoting that which is strange and rather awful

Brittany was the scene of many of Merlin's enchantments, and it was here, in the forest of Brocelande, that he was supposed to be confined under a spell. It is this story in fact that Iseult of Brittany tells to the children in Arnold's poem of *Tristram and Iseult*

"She told them of the fairy-haunted land
Away the other side of Brittany,
Beyond the heaths, edged by the lonely sea;
Of the deep forest-glades of Broce-liande,
Through whose green boughs the golden sunshine creeps,
Where Merlin by the enchanted thorn-tree sleeps," etc

9 ff The stones are described in Murray's *Handbook for France* as "grey stones, rude blocks set on end, angular, showing no marks of polish, and hirsute with the long moss which has covered the hard surface of the granite." They are ranged in eleven rows, making ten avenues or aisles, through which priestly processions may have passed

26 f The western side of Quiberon Bay is formed by a long low peninsula, which curves out to sea for a distance of about ten miles. In 1795 an expedition of 6000 French *émigrés* was landed here from a British squadron, and was almost entirely destroyed by the Republican troops under General Hoche, while the ships were prevented by a storm from rendering effective aid

28 loyal blood, because they were fighting for the Royalist cause

30. no hail, i e no shout from one vessel to another

33 Ah! where is he, etc "The author's brother, William Delafield Arnold, Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab, and author of *Oakfield, or Fellowship in the East*, died at Gibraltar on his way home from India, April the 9th, 1859."

38 the Rock of Spain Gibraltar, which is just within the Mediterranean

41 'Oh that he could once have reached,' etc, a wish.

A SOUTHERN NIGHT

This poem refers to the same event as the preceding one, the death of the author's brother on the voyage home from India. Cette, where the scene of this is laid, is situated upon a strip of land between the open Mediterranean and a lagoon, which is

one of a series lying along this coast. Hence the reference in the first stanza, where the word 'free' applied to the breaking of the sea is in contrast to the enclosed water of the lakes

7 that lovely mountain-line the range of the Cevennes behind this coast

11 beacons . a verb, meaning 'shines as a beacon'

14 once of yore an allusion to the poem called *A Summer Night*, published in the volume of 1852

21 this Midland deep cp *Scholar-Gipsy*, 244, "the blue Midland waters"

26 fordone, 'worn out' to 'fordo' is properly to 'do away,' hence 'destroy,' as in Shakspeare, *King Lear*, v. iii. .

"Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves
And desperately are dead"

27. teen, 'grief' His wife had died in India cp l 50.

43 burnous . an Arabic word, the name of an upper covering worn by Arabs, with a fold to be put over the head

53 where morning's sacred fount, etc That is, in the far East, which may be conceived to be the source of the sunlight that comes from thence

57. The irony lies in the contrast between the weary labours of their life and the peacefulness of their graves

71 possess our soul a Biblical phrase, "In your patience possess ye your souls," happily seized by the poet and applied in a different meaning from that of the text. To 'possess our soul' is here to gather our thoughts together in quietness and to realize what we are and what is the meaning of our life, instead of allowing all reflection to be overborne by external things. In the *Stanzas from the Grande Chastreuse* Arnold uses the same expression in a context which throws light on the meaning

75. The calm Mediterranean is, as it were, a level floor paved by the moonlight

77 ff. Some sage, etc We are reminded of the Purun Bhagat, who is described for us by Mr Rudyard Kipling in the *Second Jungle Book*. Such men get their daily food by begging and are gladly supported by the villagers, who desire the prayers of the holy men as a protection. "So long as there is a morsel to divide in India, neither priest nor beggar starves"

94 Saint Louis was the moving spirit in the last crusades, and himself died while engaged upon one, in the year 1270

133. What else, etc That is, as the next lines explain, 'what else is bright and calm?'

RUGBY CHAPEL

Dr Arnold, the father of the poet, died in 1842, after having been for fourteen years head-master of Rugby. He was buried under the communion-table of the school chapel and a simple stone with his name now marks the place of his grave, which is just below the chancel steps of the present enlarged building. The characteristics which are chiefly dwelt upon in this poem are the combined strength and sympathy which made him the guide and support of those weaker than himself, and the steadfast determination, so far as possible, not to let those perish who were under his care. The poem was published in the volume of 1867. It is written in the same kind of loose dactylic verse without rhymes which is used in *The Strayed Reveller*, in *Haworth Churchyard*, and in several other pieces.

2 The field, etc. This would be the Rugby School close, in which the chapel stands.

26 ff. Early in the morning of the 12th of June, 1842, after Dr. Arnold had been making preparations for the journey from Rugby to Fox How at the beginning of the midsummer holidays, he was seized with an attack of *angina pectoris*, and died within a few hours. It may be noted that the death of Matthew Arnold himself, April 15th, 1888, was almost equally sudden.

54 dim, because moral distinctions are not clearly realized

60 eddy about Here and there Cp Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, LIII. 12

" Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round,"

where the expression is used of a life without serious purpose

86 but it leads A long, steep journey, etc. We have here much the same idea of scaling a mountain height, which appears in *Thyrsis*, 141 ff, "And long the way appears," etc

92 cataracts, to be read here as a dissyllable, 'cat'racts.'

105 with lips Sternly compress'd Cp *Scholar Gipsy*, 194.

" With close-lipp'd patience for our only friend "

148 who else, etc. 'Who but for my knowledge of thee would have seemed but a dream of the heart, so poor and soul-less are the men whom I see around me'

190 Ye, like angels, appear that is, the heroic helpers and friends of mankind spoken of above, the servants, or rather the sons of God. These indeed are the same who are spoken of in a

former poem, *The Lord's Messengers*, but there we find less hopefulness than here

" Ah ! How few of them all,
Those willing servants, shall stand
In the Master's presence again !

" Hardly, hardly shall one
Come, with countenance bright,
At the close of day, from the plain," etc

LATER POEMS

In his later years Arnold exercised his powers as an elegiac poet chiefly upon the occasions when some loved pet animal died. The only exception was on the occasion of Dean Stanley's death, when he wrote the fine poem called *Westminster Abbey*. The other "Later Poems" are *Geist's Grave*, *Poor Matthias*, on the death of a favourite canary, and *Kaiser Dead*, a half-humorous commemoration of a dog of less pure breed than Geist. Arnold himself and his family were fond of animals, and these elegies, especially the first, have a surprising degree of tenderness, and yet at the same time they are free from sentimental exaggeration; they are models, in fact, of what such poems should be.

GEIST'S GRAVE

Geist was a German dachs-hound, belonging apparently to Matthew Arnold's son Richard.

15 f. The poet himself supplies the reference.

"Sunt lacrimæ rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt."

22 centuries a dissyllable, like 'cataacts' in *Rugby Chapel*,
1 92.

45 ff. The actions described are of course imaginary.

51 Crossing the frozen lake. The scene of this would perhaps be Fox How, near Rydal Water, the residence of the author's mother.

55 thine absent master, the poet's son, Richard Arnold.

70 on the Portsmouth road. The grave therefore would be at Cobham in Surrey, where the author lived in later years.

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